Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language: A Comprehensive Approach

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents, my wife, and my children, for their patience, help and encouragement. Without them, this work could not have occurred. I would like to express my deep appreciation to all of them.

Contents

1
Overview

The major aim of this book is to provide a compromise between past and present theories of language teaching and learning. The book is organized into six main parts. In the first part, the author highlights the strengths and weaknesses of both the skills-based approach and the whole-language approach. He then presents a theory that emphasizes the strengths of both and shares the weaknesses of neither. Part two consists of six chapters that are devoted to the integration of subsidiary skills with main language skills. Part three consists of four chapters that focus on the integration of main language skills with subsidiary skills. Part four consists of four chapters that are devoted to integrating main language skills with each other. Part five deals with the integration of all language skills through literature. Part six consists of two chapters that address error correction and assessment. In following this organization, the writer aims at building gradually toward whole language, and weaving error correction and assessment into the suggested approach.

It is hoped that this book will help anyone in the area of foreign language teaching and learning.

Part One

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Background Information

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Chapter One
Major Approaches to Language Teaching and Learning

1.0 Introduction

Over the last two decades or so, foreign language teaching and learning have been swayed by two major approaches: (1) the kills-based approach, sometimes referred to as the "direct," "intentional," or "formal" instructional approach, and (2) the whole-language approach, sometimes referred to as the "indirect," "incidental," or "informal" learning approach. This part of the book explores the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches, and presents a theory that emphasizes the strengths of both and shares the weaknesses of neither.

1.1 The skills-based approach

The skills-based approach drew its theoretical roots from behavioral psychology and structural linguistics. Specifically, it is based on the following principles: (1) The whole is equal to the sum of its parts; (2) There are differences between spoken and written language; (3) Oral language acquisition precedes the development of literacy; (4) Language learning is teacher-directed and fact-oriented; and (5) Students' errors are just like 'sins' which should be avoided and eliminated at all cost.

In accordance with the above principles, advocates of the skills-based approach view language as a collection of separate skills. Each skill is divided into bits and pieces of subskills. These subskills are gradually taught in a predetermined sequence through direct explanation,

modeling and repetition. Furthermore, the skill-building teacher constantly uses objective test items (e.g., multiple choice, true or false, fill in the spaces) to measure the mastery of each subskill before moving to the next.

1.2 Merits and demerits of the skills-based approach

Although there are many advantages to the skills-based approach, there are also disadvantages. Advocates of the skills-based approach claim that the teaching of language as isolated skills makes language learning easier because it spares students from tackling the complexity that language entails. They also claim that this approach reduces students' errors (Shuy, 1981). They further claim that this approach is easy to implement because it provides (a) a systematic plan that is easy to follow, and (b) graded instructional materials within and across grade levels. Nonetheless, the following weaknesses are associated with this approach: (1) There is a large discrepancy between the manner in which the language is taught and the manner in which it is actually used for communication (Norris and Hoffman, 1993; Reutzel and Hollingsworth, 1988); (2) The teaching of language as isolated skills makes it difficult because the brain cannot store bits and pieces of information for a long time (Anderson, 1984); (3) The skills-oriented programs demotivate students to study the language because what is taught to them is not relevant to their needs and interests (Acuna-Reyes, 1993); and (4) The teaching of language as isolated skills stifles students' creativity.

Despite its demerits, the skills-based approach is still the most widely used approach throughout the whole world (Ellis, 1993; Rubin, 1993). A basic reason for this is that skills-based programs are mandated by higher authorities such as boards of education and curriculum coordinators

(Anderson, 1984). Another reason is teachers' resistance to new approaches.

1.3 The whole-language approach

In response to recent theories in cognitive psychology and sociopsycholinguistics, the whole-language approach emerged in the latter part of the twentieth century. The evolution of this approach was, to a large extent, a revolt against the skills-based approach. The basic principles underlying this approach are the following: (1) The whole is more than the sum of its parts; (2) Language learning is a social process; (3) Learning is student-centered and process-oriented; (4) Language learning involves relating new information to prior knowledge; (5) Oral and written language are acquired simultaneously and have reciprocal effect on each other; and (6) Students' errors are signals of progress in language learning. For more detailed discussion of the whole language principles, see Freeman and Freeman (1992), Newman and Church (1990), Reutzel and Hollingsworth (1988).

In accordance with the above principles, whole-language theoreticians claim that all aspects of language interrelate and intertwine. They further claim that students should be given the opportunity to simultaneously use all language arts (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in meaningful, functional, and cooperative activities (Carrasquillo, 1993; Farris, 1989; Farris and Kaczmarski, 1988). These activities are often centered around topics that build upon students' background knowledge (Edelsky *et al.*, 1991; Freeman and Freeman, 1994). These topics are often selected by the students themselves (Pahl and Monson, 1992). With regard to assessment, whole-language theoreticians claim that the contextualized nature of language, obtained by means of instruments such as projects, portfolios, and observations,

provides a more realistic view of a student language than standardized tests.

1.4 Merits and demerits of the whole-language approach

Just like the skills-based approach, the whole-language approach has its advantages and disadvantages. Advocates of this approach assert that there are many advantages that can be attributed to this approach. One of these advantages is that it respects students' prior knowledge which can, in turn, encourage and foster comprehension. As Vance (1990) puts it:

> **The whole language teacher brings to each student a deep respect for his or her existing prior knowledge as well as a strong desire to expand that child's wealth of knowledge and experience, and therefore his or her power to truly comprehend. Respect for each child's prior knowledge and experience provides a basis for encouraging and fostering comprehension. (p. 175)**

Another advantage of the whole-language approach is that it subsides behavior problems (Doake, 1994; Weaver, 1990, 1994). As Weaver (1990) puts it:

> **In whole language classrooms, typically there are few behavior problems, not only because students are more actively involved in learning but because students are given the opportunity to develop self-control rather than merely submit to teacher control. Instead of controlling children by their demands, whole language teachers develop learning communities characterized by mutual respect and trust—communities in which many decisions are made cooperatively, and students**

> have numerous opportunities to make individual choices and take responsibility for their own learning. In such environments, learning flourishes and behavior problems subside. (p. 25)

Still another advantage of the whole-language approach is that it boosts students' self-esteem (Freeman and Freeman, 1994; Weaver, 1994). As Freeman and Freeman (1994) put it:

> When bilingual students are involved in a learner-centered curriculum, teachers focus on what their students can do rather than what they cannot do. This process builds student self-esteem and also raises teacher's expectations. (p. 247)

A final advantage of the whole-language approach is that it develops students creativity and critical thinking. As Weaver (1990) puts it:

> [S]tudents in whole language classrooms are thinkers and doers, not merely passive recipients of information. They learn to think critically and creatively and to process and evaluate information and ideas rather than merely to accept them. (pp. 26-27)

However, opponents of the whole-language approach argue that this approach neglects accuracy although many language teaching theoreticians and researchers (e.g., Eldredge, 1991, 1995; Goldenberg, 1991; Omaggio, 1986; Scarcella and Oxford, 1992) agree that accuracy is an essential element in the development of communication skills. Another argument against the whole-language approach, according to two of its proponents (Freeman and Freeman, 1992), is that "it won't be easy to implement, and there will

be resistance to many practices consistent with whole language" (p. 9). Still another argument is that the whole-language approach over-estimated FL students ability to select and monitor what they learn. In other words, it failed to distinguish between L1 and FL students or between beginning and advanced learners. As I think, this approach may fit only L1 students from the very beginning for two reasons. The first reason is that those students possess preschool language skills that enable them to concentrate on meaning and take full responsibility for their own learning. As Singer (1981) notes:

> **The language ability of most children at age 6 is already well developed. They have attained sophisticated control over their syntax, they possess a vocabulary of about 5000 words, and they have a phonological system that can adequately communicate their needs. (p. 295)**

The second reason is that L1 students use the language out of school in meaningful activities just like the activities the whole-language approach calls for. Conversely, in the FL context, children join schools without any FL background knowledge. Therefore, there will be a lack of fit if the whole-language approach is implemented in this context from the very beginning. It is also the height of unreasonableness to expect FL students to simultaneously learn all language skills from the very beginning. A final argument against the whole-language approach is the lack of curriculum guides.

1.5 Conclusions

From the preceding discussion, it is clear that the skills-based approach stresses skills at the expense of meaning in spite of the fact that understanding and conveying meaning is the ultimate aim of language teaching and learning. It is also

clear that the whole-language approach stresses meaning at the expense of skills in spite of the fact that skills are necessary for comprehending and conveying meaning. In other words, the whole-language approach as a reaction to the skills-based approach is too extreme. It follows, then, that the need is clearly for an approach that combines skills and meaning and moves from partial to total integration of language skills.

1.6 Principles of the comprehensive approach

In the comprehensive approach, teachers shift from closely-controlled to semi-controlled and finally to student-directed activities in every lesson. Meanwhile, they move from local to global and finally to no error correction. They also move from assessing micro-skills to assessing the understanding of whole texts, and finally to assessing the production of texts. With the use of this three-step procedure, teachers integrate subsidiary skills with main language skills and vice versa at the primary and preparatory levels. Then, with an emphasis on student-directed activities and self-assessment, they integrate each two main language skills at the secondary level and all language skills at the university level.

As noted earlier, the suggested approach shifts gradually from partial to total integration of language skills. In the partial integration phase, the teacher moves from the integration of subsidiary skills with main language skills and vice versa to the integration of each two main language skills. In the total integration phase, the teacher integrates all language skills through literature-based programs.

In summary, the suggested approach is based on the behaviorists and cognitivists' views of language teaching and learning. It also draws on the author's teaching experience as

well as research on first- and second-language teaching and learning. The following extracts show that such an approach is eagerly waited:

> In recent years we have seen the emergence of several diverse teaching methodologies. Each one is attracting practitioners who often contend that their particular technique is superior, to the exclusion of the others. However, despite the claims of these proponents, no single methodology adequately addresses the needs of all English-language students. On the contrary, evidence gained from practical experience strongly suggests that the strong points of a variety of methodologies, if skillfully combined, can complement one another, together forming a cohesive, realistic, and highly motivational teaching strategy. (Wilhoit, 1994, p. 32)

> The "either-or" logic is damaging our educational possibilities. One can be an authority and a mediator, one can use both basals and literature, language is best learned as interactive and social, but there is a place for studying grammars, form, and usage. Any classroom works better when both direct and indirect teaching occur. Child-centered teaching does not occur in a vacuum; there must be content and a teacher who is doing her best to mediate and teach content in a dialogue with the student, making the notion of a child-centered versus a teacher-centered classroom a foolish concept. Obviously direct and indirect teaching must occur in realistic classrooms where direct instruction precedes group work. (Hedley, 1993, p. 55)

Major Approaches to Language Teaching and Learning

> **The teaching of EFL students should be based on an integrated approach which brings linguistic skills and communicative abilities into close association with each other, this is due to the fact that both language use and language usage are important. (Ibrahim, 1993, p. 98)**

1.7 Self-checks

1. **Observe a whole language lesson taught by one of your colleagues, either live or recorded. Note down the main difficulties he/she encountered in applying this approach.**
2. **Observe a skills-based lesson taught by one of your colleagues, either live or recorded. Note down your impressions of the affective features of this lesson based on how students felt during the lesson (bored/interested/ angry/amused/pleasant or whatever).**
3. **The role of the whole-language teacher differs from that of the skill-building teacher. Which one do you prefer? Why?**

Part Two

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Integrating Subsidiary Skills with Main Language Skills

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Chapter Two
Handwriting

2.0 What is handwriting?

The skills-based approach views handwriting as one of the subskills involved in writing. It also holds that handwriting involves many micro-skills such as shaping, spacing, slanting, etc. From the whole language perspective, handwriting is viewed as a process through which meaning is understood and/or created.

2.1 The importance of handwriting

In spite of the fact that we live in a world that venerates typewriters and computers, handwriting is still necessary in our daily lives. In the early 1980s, Rose (1982) expressed this idea which still holds true in the third millennium as follows:

> **Many situations still require a handwriting effort. Typewriters are usually impractical for note taking; and even when a typewriter is available, most of us prefer our love letters, notes of condolence and other personal communications to be handwritten. (p. 410)**

In addition to the great extent to which handwriting is used in our lives, its importance as an aid to the various aspects of language has been recognized by many educators and applied linguists (e.g., Feitelson, 1988; Getman, 1983; Graham and Madan, 1981; Kaminsky and Powers, 1981; Lehman, 1979). Lehman (1979), for example, wrote:

> The various language skills used to produce and receive language all find support in handwriting. If reading is essentially decoding, handwriting is encoding; if composition is the communicating of ideas in an orderly way, handwriting lends a rhythmic stride to the whole process—mental organization, the act of writing, and the visual product; if spelling is arranging letters in an accepted sequence for the communicating of a word, handwriting is the physical act of doing it as well as the ordinary application of spelling skills. (p. 7)

To the above benefits, Ruedy (1983) adds that good handwriting enhances students' self-confidence, develops positive attitudes towards writing, and makes the teacher's job more pleasant and less time-consuming. On the other hand, research has shown that bad handwriting lowers essay scores (e.g., Robinson, 1986).

It appears from the foregoing that handwriting is an important skill that does not operate in isolation. That is, it affects success in spelling, vocabulary, reading, and writing. This skill, therefore, deserves the attention of both teachers and researchers.

2.2 The teaching and learning of handwriting

In skills-based classrooms, handwriting is taught as a separate skill through visual and verbal demonstrations of the formation of letters—that is, students see and listen to a description of the order and direction of the strokes of each letter. Then, they practice what has been demonstrated to them through the following:

(1) Tracing. In this type of practice, students trace the letter on dot-to-dot patterns in which the direction and order of

strokes are guided through the use of arrows and numbers.

(2) Copying. In this type of practice, students are asked to copy a model letter several times.

As shown above, although the skills-based approach directs students' attention solely toward letter formation, such an explicit letter formation instruction may be arduous, demotivating, and time-consuming.

In whole language classrooms, teachers do not teach students explicitly about letter formation. They claim that students unconsciously acquire letter formation through purposeful reading and writing activities. Although this may appear to be so for first language acquisition, it cannot be applied to EFL learners, particularly in the Arabic context where the mother tongue alphabet is completely different and runs from right to left. An effective approach to teaching handwriting to Arabic-speaking students must, therefore, move from skills to meaning through the following three-step procedure:

(1) Presentation of letters. In this step, the teacher presents letters one by one utilizing the auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and tactile modalities of his/her students.

(2) Reading and writing letters within the context of words and sentences. In this step, students practice reading and copying letters within single words by sorting mixed words out. Then, they copy segments from substitution tables to make meaningful sentences.

(3) Reading and writing letters within the context of whole paragraphs. In this step, students practice letter formation through reading scrambled sentences and rewriting them to make a meaningful paragraph.

Handwriting

2.3 Summary of research on handwriting instruction

A literature search indicated that there is little research in the area of handwriting. Most of the studies done in this area revealed that training through copying improved handwriting performance (e.g., Askov and Greff, 1975; Hirsch and Niedermeyer, 1973). Furthermore, Goldberg (1997) found that the skills-based approach produced more legible handwriting than did the whole-language approach. However, I claim that handwriting is not only a mechanical, lower-level skill but also a meaningful process. Therefore, a comprehensive approach to teaching handwriting can increase students' motivation which, in turn, can boost handwriting performance above the levels that occur with either the skills-based approach or the whole-language approach.

2.4 Self-checks

1. What is handwriting?
2. Handwriting does not operate in isolation. Discuss.
3. From your own experience, do you agree with the author that the comprehensive approach is the most appropriate approach to teaching handwriting in the FL context? Why? Why not?

Chapter Three
Vocabulary

3.0 What is vocabulary?

The skills-based approach views vocabulary as one of the subskills involved in the major language skills. It also holds that vocabulary involves many micro-skills such as pronunciation, spelling, word structure, etc. In contrast, the whole-language approach views vocabulary as word meaning within the context—that is, meaning which is more than the sum of individual words.

3.1 The importance of vocabulary

Vocabulary is a requisite for learning the main language skills. As Krashen (1989) points out, " a large vocabulary is, of course, essential for mastery of a language" (p. 439). McGinnis and Smith (1982) also point out that "without words a student seldom can understand what is being communicated to him nor can he express his thoughts to others" (p. 236). In this respect, Pittelman and Heimlich (1991) also claim that vocabulary knowledge is important in understanding both spoken and written language. They state:

> **It is not surprising that vocabulary knowledge, or knowledge of word meanings, is critical to reading comprehension. In order for children to understand what they are reading, they must know the meanings of the words they encounter. Children with limited vocabulary knowledge...will experience difficulty comprehending both oral and written text. (p. 37)**

In support of the crucial role that vocabulary plays in reading comprehension, Crow (1986) claims that for adult L2 readers the biggest difficulty in reading is not the concepts of a text, but the words representing these concepts. Hague (1987) also claims that "To read, a reader must know words. To become a better reader, a reader must learn more words" (p. 218). Howell and Morehead (1987) go so far as to say that word meanings may account for up to 70% of the variability between students who do and students who do not score well on comprehension tests.

Research has provided an overwhelming evidence that even among adults word recognition accounts for a sizable amount of variance in reading ability (e.g., Bertelson, 1986; Gough and Tunmer, 1986; Morrison, 1984, 1987; Perfetti, 1985). Research has also shown that there is a correlation between word knowledge and reading comprehension (e.g., Barr, 1985; Hoover and Gough, 1990; Kitao, 1988); and that when L2 readers' vocabulary is improved, their reading comprehension is also improved (e.g., Cziko, 1980; Davis, 1989; McDaniel and Pressley, 1986).

The role vocabulary plays in listening comprehension has also been emphasized by Mecartty (1995) who found that lexical knowledge is significantly related to listening comprehension.

Personke and Yee (1971) highlight the role that vocabulary plays in writing saying, "Fluency in writing is almost dependent upon a large store of words which can be written without thinking" (p. 22).

The importance of vocabulary to general academic achievement has also been recognized by Zientarski and Pottorff (1994). They claim that students who "possess larger

vocabularies tend to achieve greater success in their content courses" (p. 48). In support of this, Anderson and Freebody (1981) reported a strong relationship between vocabulary and academic performance.

As shown above, vocabulary is an essential component of language and we would be totally mistaken if we ignore teaching it.

3.2 The teaching and learning of vocabulary

In skills-based classrooms, vocabulary is taught as individualized, decontextualized items. The techniques consistent with this perspective include structural analysis, morphological analysis, definitions, etc. Here are some of the exercises associated with these techniques:

(1) Analyzing words and dismantling them into units of meaning, i.e., base words, affixes, and inflections,
(2) Dividing compound words into free and bound morphemes, i.e., morphemes that can stand alone and morphemes that cannot,
(3) Adding suffixes and prefixes to root words to make as many new words as possible,
(4) Adding affixes to words to make ones that agree with the given definitions, e.g.,
--mature = not mature joy-- = full of joy
(5) Using analogies to relate known to unknown words, e.g., teacher: students: : -----: car
(6) Forming adverbs from adjectives,
(7) Matching acronyms with the expressions they came from,
(8) Matching contractions with their meanings,
(9) Forming past and past participle from root verbs,
(10) Forming plurals from singular nouns, etc.

Proponents of the skills-based approach claim that teaching vocabulary apart from context facilitates the formulation of an accurate mental representation of each word and enhances storage in memory. As Ormrod (1986) points out, when words are presented in isolation, students' attention can be directed solely toward the learning of these words. Gough and Juel (1991) also contend that "What the child needs is a way to recognize novel words on the basis of their form rather than their context" (p. 51). However, opponents of the skills-based approach claim that decontextualized practice is time-consuming and contrary to the nature of the language. Nagy and Anderson (1984) add that the sheer number of words a teacher has to teach casts serious doubt on the utility of direct vocabulary instruction.

In whole language classrooms, learners unconsciously acquire vocabulary through exposure to oral and written language. The major criticism of this approach is that a mere exposure to oral and written language may not necessarily facilitate vocabulary learning for several reasons. The first reason, as Jenkins and Dixon (1983) note, is that "when encountering a novel word in a context, the reader or listener may not recognize the situation as a vocabulary learning opportunity" (p. 239). A second reason is that students may shift their attention away from passage segments containing difficult words (Anderson and Freebody, 1981). A third reason is that context does not always provide enough clues to word meaning because writers write to transmit ideas, not to define words (Beck *et al.*, 1983; Schatz and Baldwin, 1986; Sinatra and Dowd, 1991). A fourth reason is that FL students' low proficiency may not permit acquiring words from context. It seems, therefore, that incidental learning of vocabulary from context may take place but not to the degree needed to explain large additions to students' vocabulary stores. As Watanabe (1997) notes, "Although incidental

learning of vocabulary through context is possible, it is not always efficient" (p. 288).

From the foregoing, it seems that neither direct instruction nor incidental learning is sufficient for vocabulary development. Therefore, a combination of direct vocabulary instruction and incidental learning can boost vocabulary learning above the levels that occur with either alone. Accordingly, the comprehensive approach holds that the teaching of vocabulary should shift from identifying words in isolation to recognizing and using them in sentences, and finally to understanding and producing them in contexts. It also holds that the teacher should teach some new words and ask students to acquire others from context. In other words, this approach asserts that basic vocabulary should be taught through direct instruction and other words will be learned naturally by the students. This approach suggests the following three-step procedure for teaching vocabulary to foreign language students:

(1) Recognizing words in isolation. In this step, the teacher explains some of the basic, unknown words through structural analysis, definition, translation, etc.

(2) Recognizing and using words in sentences. In this step, students read the words—explained to them in step 1—in meaningful sentences. Then, they use these words in sentences of their own.

(3) Understanding and using words in contexts. In this step, students understand the most appropriate meanings of the words explained to them in an oral or written text. They also try to acquire other words from this text. Then, they use these words in summarizing the text and discussing what they read or listened to with one another.

The previously-mentioned steps are equally essential to the teaching of vocabulary at the pre-secondary level.

Vocabulary

Accordingly, the exercises and activities utilized in these steps should be adapted to suit the students' level of proficiency—that is, words should vary in difficulty from the easiest primer-level to second- and third-level words according to students' level of proficiency.

3.3 Summary of research on vocabulary instruction

Research indicates that both the skills-based approach and the whole-language approach increase vocabulary achievement. Some studies obtained positive results with the skills-based approach. These studies revealed that: (1) Morphological generalizations help students determine the meanings of unknown words (Wysocki and Jenkins, 1987); (2) Explicit instruction in context clues enhances students' ability to determine the meanings of unknown words from the context (Askov and Kamm, 1976; Huckin and Jin, 1987); (3) Phonics instruction positively affects word recognition (for a review of studies in this area, see Adams, 1990).

A second body of research (e.g., Herman *et al.*, 1987; Joe, 1998; Nagy *et al.*, 1985a, and b) demonstrated that incidental vocabulary learning during reading produced a small, but statistically reliable increase in word knowledge.

A third body of research found no significant differences between direct instruction and incidental learning in vocabulary achievement (Mercer, 1992; Nemko, 1984; Schatz and Baldwin, 1986; Shapiro and Gunderson, 1988).

The results of the above studies can be interpreted in light of the abilities of students participated in these studies. In support of this interpretation, research has shown that better readers profited more from context than did less skilled readers. Jenkins, Stein and Wysocki (1984), for example, examined the hypothesis that new vocabulary knowledge can

be acquired through incidental learning of word meanings from context. In their study, fifth graders of two reading abilities read passages containing unfamiliar words. The results indicated that better readers profited more from context than did less skilled readers. They concluded that "Perhaps combinations of informal vocabulary instruction and incidental learning boost vocabulary learning above the levels that occur with either alone" (p. 785). Similar findings were also reported by McKeown (1985) who found that less skilled fifth graders were less able to identify the meaning of words from context even after context clues had been presented to them. Becerra-Keller (1993) also found that in grades 2 and 3 the use of the whole-language approach did not have an effect on vocabulary achievement, but in grade 4 it did seem to have an effect. Such results provide evidence in support of the author's view that direct instruction and contextual learning can add significantly to the vocabulary of students of all ability levels. In support of this view and from their survey of research dealing with the conditions of vocabulary learning, Beck and McKeown (1991) conclude that "no one method has been shown to be consistently superior.... [and] there is advantage from methods that use a variety of techniques" (p. 805). Chall (1987) also supports the comprehensive approach to teaching vocabulary in the following way:

> It would seem from the research and from experience that both direct teaching and contextual learning are needed. Students need to learn words through reading, and they need to learn words directly, apart from the context. (p. 15)

Vocabulary

3.4 Self-checks

1. Assign two of the classes you teach to either a context or a non-context condition. In the no-context condition teach words directly in isolation. In the context condition let students read the same words embedded in a passage. Find if your students can learn new words from the context and if the number of words learned from context is significantly greater than words learned from direct instruction.

2. From your own experience, do you agree with the author that neither direct instruction nor incidental learning seems to account for growth in students' vocabulary? Why? Why not?

3. Do you think that secondary school students can acquire vocabulary only through exposure to oral and written language? Why? Why not?

Chapter Four
Spelling

4.0 What is spelling?

The skills-based approach views spelling as one of the subskills involved in reading and writing. It also holds that spelling involves many micro-skills such as letter-naming, phonics, word structure, etc. Conversely, the whole-language approach views spelling as a developmental process through which meaning is understood and/or created.

4.1 The importance of spelling

The importance of spelling lies in the fact that to be literate, one must become proficient in spelling. Learning to spell correctly is necessary for being a good writer (Graham, 1983; Scardamalia, 1981; Treiman, 1993). Treiman (1993), for example, expresses this idea in the following way:

> **[T]he ability to spell words easily and accurately is an important part of being a good writer. A person who must stop and puzzle over the spelling of each word, even if that person is aided by a computerized spelling checker, has little attention left to devote to other aspects of writing. (p. 3)**

Spelling also improves reading because knowledge of spelling-sound correspondences is a basic component of reading. As Adams (1990) notes, "skillful reading depends critically on the deep and thorough acquisition of spellings and spelling-sound relationships" (p. 421). Moreover, research has shown that there is a strong relationship between spelling and reading (e.g., Bear and Barone, 1989;

Ehri and Wilce, 1987; Gough *et al.*, 1992; Henderson, 1990; Juel *et al.*, 1986; Zutell, 1992; Zutell and Rasinski, 1989). Instruction in spelling has also been found to have a strong effect on beginning reading (e.g., Bradley, 1988; Bradley and Bryant, 1985; Uhry, 1989). Research has also shown that there is a strong relationship between spelling and word recognition (e.g., Bear, 1982; Juel *et al.*, 1986), and between spelling and reading comprehension (e.g., Beers, 1980). Moreover, poorly developed spelling knowledge has been shown to hinder children's writing and to obstruct their vocabulary development (e.g., Adams *et al.*, 1996; Read, 1986), and to be the most frequent and pervasive cause of reading difficulty (e.g., Bruck, 1990; Perfetti, 1985; Rack *et al.*, 1992; Vellutino, 1991).

Some spelling theorists add that spelling is very much a part of listening and speaking (e.g., Buchanan, 1989; Gentry and Gillet, 1993).

4.2 The teaching and learning of spelling

In skills-based classrooms, teachers teach spelling rules through mechanical drills. Although this approach directs students' attention solely toward spelling, it has its own weaknesses. One weakness is that it draws students' attention away from the communicative function of spelling. Another weakness is that spelling rules have too many exceptions to be consciously learned (Parry and Hornsby, 1988; Smith, 1982).

In whole language classrooms, spelling is learned by immersing students in or exposing them to print (Goodman, 1986). Students are also encouraged to use invented spelling (approximations) in writing (Clay, 1985; Invernizzi *et al.*, 1994; Wilde, 1992). In spite of the fact that the whole-language approach to teaching spelling promotes

independence and integrates spelling with language use, we cannot assume that proficiency in spelling will follow directly from engaging students in reading and writing activities. The reasons for this are stated by Treiman (1993) as follows:

> **There is some truth to the whole-language philosophy. Many children do pick up correspondences between letters and sounds on their own, even when the correspondences are not explicitly taught. However, the insight behind the whole-language approach—that children can learn many things on their own—should not be pushed too far. For one thing, not all children easily pick up relations between phonemes and graphemes on their own. For another thing, this learning is more rapid for some correspondences than for others. (pp. 124-125)**

Opponents of the whole-language approach also claim that students cannot invent spelling without linguistic information. Such information is indeed the primary source of invented spelling. In support of this claim, Tangel and Blackman (1992) found that phonemic awareness instruction positively affects children's invented spelling. They then concluded that "In order to produce invented spellings, a child must possess some degree of linguistic awareness" (p. 235). Additionally, I claim that FL beginners cannot invent spelling because they lack the speaking skill which they segment during this process.

From the foregoing, it seems that we need an approach that shifts from direct instruction to incidental learning of spelling. Here is the three-step procedure of this approach:

(1) Presentation of spelling rules. In this step, students receive direct instruction in a spelling rule at a time.

(2) Learning spelling through reading. In this step, students see how the spelling rule—explained to them in step 1—is applied in context. They also develop visual images of words in the reading material.
(3) Producing spelling through writing. In this step, students apply the spelling rule explained to them in summarizing the text they read in step 2. While summarizing this text, they also invent spelling of words whose spelling is unknown to them.

As noted above, the comprehensive approach asserts that it is of utmost importance that the teacher should teach the spelling of some words and ask students to acquire the spelling of others from context and through invented spelling.

4.3 Summary of research on spelling instruction

Many studies demonstrated an increase in spelling ability under the skills-based approach (e.g., Ball and Blackman, 1991; Connelly *et al.*, 1999; Ghazi, 1983; Gordon, 1992; Haan, 1999; Lie, 1991; Robinson, 1980; White, 1988). Other studies demonstrated an increase in spelling ability under the whole-language approach (e.g., Cunningham and Stanovich 1990; Shapiro and Gunderson, 1988; Stanovich and West, 1989).

As shown above, research in the area of spelling provides indirect evidence that instead of either-or planning of spelling instruction, the comprehensive approach can be more effective in increasing spelling achievement. Direct support for this approach comes from studies done by Castle *et al.* (1994), Rosencrans (1995) and Shefelbine (1995). Castle *et al.* (1994) found that providing phonemic-awareness instruction within a whole language program had significant effects on spelling and reading performance. Rosencrans (1995) found that direct instruction within a whole language

spelling program increased children's spelling achievement. Shefelbine (1995) found that combining temporary (invented) spelling with systematic, formal spelling instruction resulted in more rapid growth in both correct spelling and word recognition than did either approach alone.

4.4 Self-checks

1. **Do you agree with the author that skills and meaning must be combined in the teaching of spelling? Why? Why not?**
2. **Develop a plan that moves from skills to meaning in teaching a particular spelling rule.**
3. **Which is the most appropriate approach to teaching spelling to your students? Give reasons.**

Chapter Five
Grammar

5.0 What is grammar?

The skills-based approach views grammar as a set of micro-skills, including syntax, morphology, rhetorical organization, etc. Conversely, the whole-language approach views grammar as a process through which meaning is understood and/or created.

5.1 The importance of grammar

The underlying rationale for the teaching of grammar in EFL classrooms is multi-faceted. We teach grammar to EFL students because it is the tool by which messages are produced. Without it, learners cannot speak or write effectively (Schleppegrell, 1998). It also helps to make language input more comprehensible (Eskey and Grabe, 1989; Scarcella and Oxford, 1992). With respect to reading comprehension, for example, Eskey and Grabe (1989) point out that "Reading requires a relatively high degree of grammatical control over structures that appear in whatever readings are given to students" (p. 226). Finally, we teach grammar because the constraints of the FL classroom make its natural acquisition almost impossible (Alexander, 1990). There is also evidence that grammar instruction improves students written and/or oral language proficiency (e.g., Davis, 1996; Fotos, 1992; Govindasamy, 1995; Melendez, 1993; Yeung, 1993).

5.2 The teaching and learning of grammar

The skill-building teachers teach the rules of grammar explicitly and then have students practice these rules through

mechanical exercises. Such exercises consist of isolated and unrelated sentences. Among these exercises are the following:

(1) Substitution exercises. In this type of exercises, students get accurate sentences by picking words/phrases from columns, one from each.

(2) Transformation exercises. In this type of exercises, students change sentences in certain ways in response to call-words.

Opponents of the skills-based approach to teaching grammar claim that an overemphasis on explicit grammar can produce a situation in which students see grammar as more important than the meaning they are trying to understand or convey. They also claim that the teaching of grammar is time consuming, and the more time spent on teaching grammar, the less time spent on using the language. Krashen and Terrell (1983) add that "any grammar-based method which purports to develop communication skills will fail with the majority of students" (p. 16).

In whole language classrooms, grammar is learned incidentally through oral and written communication. In spite of the fact that such an approach focuses on meaning, it can lead to the development of an ungrammatical, pidginized form of the foreign language beyond which students cannot progress (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Gary and Gary, 1981). Thus, the major problem with the whole-language approach is that it sacrifices accuracy for the sake of fluency. As Hammerly (1991) puts it:

> **When communication is emphasized early in a language program, linguistic accuracy suffers and linguistic competence does not develop much beyond the point needed for the bare transmission of messages.... In the classroom, fluency does not**

> lead to accuracy, and most errors do not disappear through communicative interaction. In the classroom, a language cannot be acquired unconsciously with good results. But through largely conscious procedures a language can be successfully learned in the classroom. This can be done quite well through systematic instruction, which should precede and build up to part of the curriculum being taught in SL. (p. 10)

From the foregoing, it seems that both the skills-based approach and the whole-language approach to teaching grammar are complementary. Therefore, I claim that combining them can be more effective than relying on one of them alone. In support of this new approach, Hammerly (1991) notes that "An early emphasis on free communication ... seems to guarantee linguistic incompetence at the end of the program, just as surely as an exclusive emphasis on linguistic structure guarantees communicative incompetence" (p. 10). Omaggio (1986) also suggests that there should be emphasis on both grammatical accuracy and meaningful communication and that early meaningful verbal communication is not possible without some grammatical knowledge. The same standpoint is also supported by Pachler and Bond (1999) in the following way:

> [F]oreign language teachers must not only focus on developing the learner's explicit [knowledge of grammar] but also on facilitating the development of his or her implicit knowledge by creating an acquisition-rich classroom environment. (p. 100)

What is needed, then, is a combination of grammar instruction and whole language. In this new approach, grammar should be taught for the sake of communication,

not for its own sake. Such an approach should shift from explicit teaching of grammatical rules to using these rules for understanding and then expressing meaning in communicative contexts. Here is the three-step procedure of this approach:

(1) Presentation of grammatical rules. In this step, the teacher explains one grammatical rule at a time. Such a rule should provide the basis for the other two steps.

(2) Understanding grammar in whole texts. In this step, the teacher provides students with an oral or written text in which the grammatical rule—explained to them in step 1—is used. While listening to or reading this text, the students focus on the meaning given by this specific rule. They also try to pick up other rules on their own.

(3) Using grammar in producing whole texts. In this step, students use the grammatical rule explained to them as well as the rules they acquired by themselves in writing whole texts or interacting with one another. In doing so, they move from summarizing the text presented to them in step 2 to creating a text of their own.

5.3 Summary of research on grammar instruction

A body of research revealed that communicative language teaching did not lead to grammatical accuracy (e.g., Harley and Swain, 1984; Swain, 1985, 1989).

A second body of research revealed that learners who received explicit grammar instruction showed greater gains on grammatical competence than did those who received implicit or no instruction (e.g., Concepcion, 1992; Doughty, 1991; Graaff, 1997; Master, 1994; Moroishi, 1998; Scott, 1989, 1990).

A third body of studies indicated that form-focused instruction was more useful in second language learning,

when aimed at the perception and processing of input than when it focused on practice as output (e.g., Day and Shapson, 1991; VanPatten and Cadiemo, 1993).

Viewed collectively, research in the area of grammar shows that grammar can be regarded as both a skill and a process and that a combination of form and meaning can contribute to higher levels of accuracy and fluency. In support of the comprehensive approach, some studies found that students who received explicit grammar instruction within communicatively organized classrooms showed greater accuracy in subsequent use of the grammar points taught to them than students who received form-oriented instruction alone or no form-oriented instruction at all (e.g., Bernardy, 1998; Lightbown and Spada, 1990; Montgomery and Eisenstein, 1985; Spada, 1987; White, 1991; White *et al.*, 1991).

5.4 Self-checks

1. What role can grammar play in foreign/second language learning?
2. Is grammar a means or an end? Why?
3. Develop two lesson plans—one is explicit and the other is implicit—for teaching a particular grammatical rule. Then apply them in two classes at the same level (one for each). Find if there are any differences in understanding and using this rule in oral communication between the two classes.

Chapter Six
Pronunciation

6.0 What is pronunciation?

According to the skills-based approach, the concept of pronunciation involves sounds of the language, stress, and intonation. The whole-language approach views pronunciation as a process through which meaning is understood and/or created.

6.1 The importance of pronunciation

The importance of pronunciation lies in the fact that it helps students read effectively. Additionally, students must know the sounds that letters make in order to speak and understand what others say. In support of the importance of pronunciation, research has shown that phonological awareness is more highly related to learning to read (e.g., Ehri, 1992; Share *et al.*, 1984; Stanovich, 1986, 1993, 1993-94; Tunmer and Hoover, 1992), and to spell (e.g., Ehri, 1992; Liberman *et al.*, 1985; Lundberg *et al.*, 1980; Nation and Hulme, 1997; Perin, 1983). It has also been found that phonological awareness is the most important causal factor separating normal and disabled readers (e.g., Share and Stanovich, 1995). Research has also shown that phonetic analytic skills are predictors of beginning reading achievement (e.g., Evans and Carr, 1985; Fox and Routh, 1976; Tunmer and Nesdale, 1985; Williams, 1980); and that there is a causal link between phonics knowledge and reading comprehension (e.g., Andrews, 1985; Eldredge *et al.*, 1990).

6.2 The teaching and learning of pronunciation

The skills-oriented teachers teach the rules of pronunciation explicitly and then have students practice these rules through segmentation and blending exercises such as the following:

(1) Identifying the sounds of letters,
(2) Separating words into sounds,
(3) Breaking up words into syllables,
(4) Counting phonemes in words,
(5) Blending phonemes to compose words,
(6) Segmenting words into phonemes,
(7) Locating the stressed syllable within words,
(8) Isolating the initial, middle, or final sound of a word,
(9) Generating words that begin with a specific initial phoneme,
(10) Making new words by substituting one phoneme for another,
(11) Deleting a particular phoneme and regenerating a word from the remainder,
(12) Specifying which sound has been left out in words like "meat" and "eat",
(13) Recognizing rhyme in words: e.g., Does "fish" rhyme with "dish"?
(14) Matching a word-sound to another word-sound: e.g., Does "fat" end like "cat"?
(15) Listening to a group of words to identify which one is different, etc.

Advocates of the skills-based approach claim that if pronunciation is not taught, it naturally follows that errors will occur. However, opponents of this approach argue that concentrating too heavily on phonics instruction will result in students losing the natural insight that language is meaningful. They also claim that sounds and stresses differ and affect one another within the flow of speech. They

further claim that students cannot endure the non-contextual phonics training (McNally, 1994), and that "rules of phonics are too complex...and too unreliable...to be useful" (Smith, 1992, p. 438).

Whole language teachers leave pronunciation instruction out. They claim that phonics is best learned incidentally through listening, speaking, reading and writing. Winsor and Pearson (1992), for example, claim that when students engage in invented spelling during writing, they segment the speech stream into phonemes, and this, in turn, develops their phonemic awareness and phonetic knowledge. In spite of the fact that the whole-language approach focuses on meaning, it provides little help in making graphic-phonemic information explicit to students, and causes severe pronunciation problems that are difficult to erase.

In light of the foregoing, the author claims that both phonics and whole language are important, neither is satisfactory by itself. Accordingly, the comprehensive approach shifts from the presentation of phonics rules to understanding and then producing these rules in whole texts. Below is the three-step procedure of this approach:

(1) Presentation of pronunciation rules. In this step, the teacher explains one pronunciation rule at a time. Such a rule should be relevant to his/her students' communicative needs.
(2) Understanding pronunciation in whole texts. In this step, the teacher provides students with an oral text in which the pronunciation rule—explained to them in step 1—is used. While listening to this text, the students focus on the meanings of words within the context and try to acquire the pronunciation of other words from this context.

(3) **Using pronunciation in producing whole texts. In this step, students use the pronunciation rule explained to them in step 1 as well as the rules they acquired by themselves in reading mini-dialogues, and in acting out or role-playing a situation they encounter in daily life.**

6.3 Summary of research on pronunciation instruction

Many studies showed that the teaching of phonics through explicit instruction improved students' pronunciation skills (e.g., Griffith and Olson, 1992; Isaacs, 1996; Lundberg *et al.*, 1988; Murakawa, 1982). For more studies that show the advantages of direct and systematic teaching of phonics in early grades, see Adams (1990) and Chall (1983). Other studies indicated that whole language programs resulted in the acquisition of phonics skills (e.g., Shapiro and Gunderson, 1988).

As shown above, research in the area of phonics shows that both the skills-based approach and the whole-language approach have positive effects on students' phonological skills. Therefore, the author claims that a comprehensive approach can yield better results than relying on either the skills-based approach or the whole-language approach alone. Direct support of this approach comes from many studies which demonstrated that students who received explicit pronunciation instruction within whole language classrooms showed greater gains than either the skills-based approach or the whole-language approach alone (e.g., Castle, 1999; Larsen, 1997; Walther, 1998). For more studies that show the advantages of combining phonics and whole language in early reading instruction, see Honig (1996), and Sherman (1998).

Pronunciation

6.4 Self-checks

1. **Pronunciation is both a prerequisite and a consequence of learning to read and speak. Discuss.**
2. **Two options exist for integrating pronunciation and whole language. Some methodologists believe that teachers should begin with discourse-level and work down to discrete sounds; others believe that teachers should begin with discrete sounds and work up to discourse-level. Which one, do you think, is more effective for EFL students? Why?**
3. **Phonics and whole language are not alternative routes to the same goals. Discuss.**

Chapter Seven
Punctuation

7.0 What is punctuation?

From the skill-building perspective, punctuation is defined as a collection of micro-skills, including the full stop, the question mark, the colon, the semicolon, etc. From the whole language perspective, punctuation is defined as a process through which meaning is understood and/or created.

7.1 The importance of punctuation

The importance of punctuation lies in the fact that it achieves the clarity and effectiveness of writing. It also links or separates groups of ideas and distinguishes what is important in the sentence from what is subordinate (Bruthiaux, 1993). Punctuation marks are also the reader's signposts. They send out messages that say stop, ask a question, and so on (Backscheider, 1972; Rose, 1982).

7.2 The teaching and learning of punctuation

The skill-building teachers teach punctuation as a separate skill through explicit instruction of the punctuation rules. Students then practice what they have been taught by punctuating individual, uncontextualized sentences. Advocates of this approach claim that direct instruction of punctuation rules makes punctuation easier to learn. However, critics of this approach claim that such rules are meaningless when taught alone. They add that the teaching of such meaningless rules leads to rote learning and to negative attitudes towards punctuation and writing in general. These negative attitudes lead, in turn, to writing behavior whose purpose is to avoid bad writing, not to create

good writing (Limaye, 1983). They also claim that direct instruction in punctuation takes the time that can be profitably spent in actual writing.

Whole language teachers leave punctuation instruction out. They claim that punctuation grows out of students' experience with written language (Wilde, 1992). In spite of the fact that this approach stresses meaning, its critics claim that not all students acquire punctuation rules simply through immersion in a print-rich environment, and that some students need direct instruction in this aspect of language.

From the foregoing, it appears that the two approaches can make a contribution—that is, none of them can do the whole job. In other words, I claim that combining them can be more effective than relying exclusively on either alone. Therefore, the so-called comprehensive approach claims that a combination of the two approaches can be superior to just adopting one of them. This approach holds that the teaching of punctuation should move from the presentation of rules to using these rules in reading and writing activities. Below is the three-step procedure of this approach:

(1) Presentation of punctuation rules. In this step, the teacher explains one punctuation rule at a time. Such a rule should be relevant to his/her students' communicative needs.
(2) Understanding punctuation in whole texts. In this step, the teacher provides students with a written text in which the punctuation rule—explained to them in step 1—is used. While reading this text, students focus on the meaning given by this specific rule. They also try to pick up other rules on their own.
(3) Using punctuation in producing whole texts. In this step, students use the punctuation rule explained to them as

well as the rules they acquired by themselves in writing whole texts. In doing so, they move from summarizing the text they read in step 2 to creating a text of their own.

7.3 Summary of research on punctuation instruction

A literature review related to punctuation instruction revealed that some studies demonstrated that the teaching of punctuation through explicit instruction increased students' awareness of punctuation marks (e.g., Abou-Hadid, 1994; Nazir, 1985). Other studies indicated that the whole language programs resulted in the acquisition of punctuation skills (e.g., Calkins, 1980; Edelsky, 1983). Still other studies showed that the whole-language approach was as effective as the skills-based approach in increasing students' awareness of punctuation marks (Lopez, 1986; Mancillas, 1986; Miller, 1986; Varner, 1986).

The research reviewed above is clearly in line with the author's suggestion that the teaching of punctuation should move from skills to meaning.

7.4 Self-checks

1. **Punctuation is both a prerequisite and a consequence of learning to read and write. Discuss.**
2. **Find whether you could use the whole-language approach to teaching punctuation in your classes.**
3. **It seems that rules are not sufficient for perfect punctuation. Do you think so? Why? Why not?**

Part Three

Integrating Main Language Skills with Subsidiary Skills

Chapter Eight
Listening

8.0 What is listening?

From the skill-building perspective, listening is defined as a collection of micro-skills, including phonics, vocabulary, grammar, etc. In this respect, some language teaching theorists and researchers have constructed a number of taxonomies delineating the micro-skills needed for effective listening (e.g., DeHaven, 1988; Field, 1997; Lund, 1990; Lundsteen, 1989; Peterson, 1991; Richards, 1983; Rivers, 1981; Rubin, 1990; Wipf, 1984). Richards' (1983) taxonomy, for example, lists 33 microskills that students need to master for effective conversational listening, and 18 microskills for academic listening. From the whole language perspective, listening is defined as an active process in which the student constructs meaning from an aural text. The definition of listening, which in the author's opinion provides a sound theoretical base to develop listening in EFL students, must involve both skills and meaning. The following extracts are in support of the author's view:

> [I]n developing classroom activities and materials for teaching listening comprehension, a clear understanding is needed of the nature of top-down and bottom-up approaches to listening and how these processes relate to different kinds of listening purposes. (Richards, 1990, p. 65)

> L2 listening is not just a "bottom-up" skill in which the meaning can be derived from perception or comprehension of the sum of all discrete sounds,

> syllables, words, or phrases (Ur, 1984). L2 listening does indeed involve some "bottom-up" processing, but at the same time it requires substantial amounts of "top-down" processing in which meaning is inferred from broad contextual clues and background knowledge (Richards, 1983). (Oxford, 1993, p. 207)

8.1 The importance of listening

There are a number of reasons why listening is important for first- and second-language learners. Firstly, and most importantly, listening is an essential prerequisite for oral communication to take place (Benson and Hijett, 1980). Secondly, it often influences the development of reading and writing (Scarcella and Oxford, 1992), and helps to enlarge students' vocabulary (Rubin, 1982). Thirdly, it plays a central role in academic success because the lecture remains the most widely used method for instruction at all levels (Dunkel, 1991; Powers, 1985).

8.2 The teaching and learning of listening

In skills-based classrooms, the teaching of listening emphasizes the mastery of the subskills involved in listening for hope that students themselves would put these subskills together and become proficient listeners. These subskills include identifying isolated speech sounds, recognizing words with reduced syllables, recognizing the stress patterns of words, distinguishing between similar-sounding words (as between 'cat' and 'cut'), recognizing reduced forms of words, discriminating between intonation contours in spoken sentences, etc. These subskills and many others are mastered individually through direct explanation, modeling and repetition. The mastery of each subskill is then measured by means of objective test items before moving to the next. Although efficient auditory perception underlies effective

listening, it is not right to suppose that learning to listen involves massive practice with decoding alone (Rost, 1992).

In whole language classrooms, listening is learned as a unitary art because normal speech, as whole language theoreticians believe, is continuous and not chopped up into discrete sounds. Therefore, whole language teachers teach listening in real, meaningful communication settings. In these settings, students fit everything they hear into a context. It is clear that the whole-language approach stresses meaning at the expense of skills in spite of the fact that the lack of skills can present an obstacle to FL comprehension. This is largely because FL listeners are still mastering the basic patterns of phonology and grammar which the native speaker understands so effortlessly. It seems that the skills-based approach and the whole-language approach are not mutually exclusive but rather tend to complement each other.

The preceding discussion offers support for the theoretical position of the comprehensive approach to teaching FL listening. This approach suggests the following three-step procedure for the teaching of listening to EFL students:

(1) Presentation of listening skills. In this step, the teacher explains some new vocabulary, a new structure and a phonics rule. Such skills should provide the basis for the other two steps.
(2) Guided listening. In this step, students listen to a short passage or dialogue. While listening, and under the guidance of their teacher, students focus on the meanings of the language items explained to them. They also try to guess the meanings of other language items from the context.
(3) Independent listening. In this step, each student independently listens to a passage or dialogue compatible with his/her prior knowledge. After listening, he/she

proceeds, on his/her own, from answering questions about the ideas explicitly stated in the text to answering questions that require information inferred from or implied in it. He/she then discusses what he/she listened to with other students.

8.3 Summary of research on listening instruction

Although relatively little research is available in the area of listening, some studies showed that proficiency in listening was attained through direct instruction in listening subskills (e.g., Al-Gameel, 1982; Cosgrove and Patterson, 1978; El-Koumy, 1996; Geiss and Mayer, 1998; Ironsmith and Whitehurst, 1978; Ratliff, 1987).

A second body of research found that the whole-language approach was effective in improving listening comprehension (e.g., Stelly, 1991).

As indicated above, research reviewed in the area of listening provides a strong rationale for using the comprehensive approach to teaching listening comprehension. Indirect support of this approach also comes from a study done by El-Koumy (2000) which showed that the skills-based approach was more effective than the whole-language approach for developing the listening comprehension of low ability listeners and that the whole-language approach was effective only for high ability listeners. These results suggest that the comprehensive approach can serve both low and high ability listeners.

8.4 Self-checks

1. **Which of the three approaches mentioned in this chapter do you feel most comfortable with? why?**
2. **With reference to the three-step procedure given in 8.2, develop a listening lesson plan for one of the lessons you**

teach. Find out how well, or badly, it works with your students.

3. Aural decoding is essential for listening comprehension, but it is not sufficient. Discuss.

Chapter Nine
Speaking

9.0 What is speaking?

From the skill-building perspective, speaking is defined as a collection of micro-skills, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, etc. From the whole language perspective, speaking is defined as an oral process of meaning construction and expression. The definition of speaking, which in the author's opinion provides a sound theoretical base to promote speaking in EFL students, must combine both skills and meaning.

9.1 The importance of speaking

In the modern world, English is used as an international language in many fields such as diplomacy, trade and tourism. Non-native speakers, therefore, frequently find themselves in many situations where they have to speak in English. Speaking is also regarded by some linguists as the base upon which other language skills are founded. As Palmer (1965) points out, "Learning to speak a language is always by far the shortest road to learning to read and to write it" (p. 15).

9.2 The teaching and learning of speaking

In skills-based classrooms, speaking is taught as a set of discrete subskills through oral mechanical drills. On the other hand, in whole language classrooms, the ability to speak is developed from spontaneous interaction in naturalistic situations.

Opponents of the skills-based approach to teaching speaking claim that the teaching of skills is tedious and meaningless. On the other hand, opponents of the whole-language approach claim that spontaneous interaction may lead students to cease progress at a certain level. They further claim that no one can speak effectively without language form. Additionally, unlike native speakers, FL beginners cannot spontaneously interact with the teacher or with one another because they lack the skills that enable them to do so.

On the basis of the preceding discussion, it is the author's contention that ignoring skills or meaning may result in making speech generation more difficult for EFL students. In other words, I claim that both skills and meaning are necessary for students to speak a foreign language well. In support of the author's view, Dobson (1989) suggests that for teaching speaking to EFL students, the teacher should "help the student move from pseudo-communication, in which his use of English is fictitiously concocted and predictable, to communication where he expresses his personal ideas and needs in the context of reality" (p. 1). Accordingly, the comprehensive approach holds that the teaching of speaking to EFL students should move from oral drills to guided conversation, and finally to free-communication. This three-step procedure is explained below.

(1) Presentation of speaking skills. In this step, the teacher explains some word contractions, a speaking rule and a phonics rule. Such skills should provide the basis for the other two steps.

(2) Guided conversation. In this step, the teacher prompts students to interact with him/her or with one another, within the limits of their competence and the new materials introduced in step 1 and in previous lessons.

He/she can use "Ask me/your colleague What/When/ Where...." or "Ask me/your colleague if...."

(3) Free conversation. In this step, the teacher provides opportunities for the learners to engage actively in using the newly introduced language items, among others, in pair or small group activities. In these activities, learners express themselves in an uncontrolled way. Meanwhile, the teacher can move among them to make sure that every student is participating.

9.3 Summary of research on speaking instruction

In support of the skills-based approach to teaching speaking, a number of studies showed that proficiency in speaking was attained through direct instruction in speaking skills (e.g., Al-Gameel, 1982; Donahue and Bryan, 1983; Gafaar, 1982; Hieke, 1981; Sonnenschein and Whitehurst, 1980; Whitehurst, 1976; Whitehurst and Merkur, 1977). Indirect support for the skills-based approach to teaching speaking also comes from a study done by Howe (1985) which revealed a higher positive correlation between phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic processes involved in speech generation.

Another body of research found that the whole-language approach was effective in improving speech generation (e.g., Starvish, 1985).

Viewed collectively, previous research on speaking instruction provides indirect support for the comprehensive approach. Direct support for this approach also comes from studies done by Higgs and Clifford (1982) and Porter (1986). Higgs and Clifford (1982) found that learners in a class of foreign/second language, labeled "terminal 2/2+, were stuck at the Advanced/Advanced-Plus level of speaking on the ACTFL proficiency scale. That is, they exhibited "fossilized"

language behavior that they were apparently unable to ameliorate. Higgs and Clifford attributed this phenomenon to arriving at this level through "communication-first" experience—either in a classroom where grammatical precision was not valued or through learning the language in a natural, uninstructed setting. They compared these terminal learners to others who arrived at the same point through an "accuracy-first" program and found that learners in the latter group were capable of progressing beyond the 2/2+ boundary. These data imply that accuracy-based, explicit instruction is necessary in order to avoid producing students who cease progress in speech generation at a certain level. In her study Porter (1986) found that ESL learners could not provide each other with the accurate grammatical and sociolinguistic input. In discussing the implication of this finding, she stated that teachers have to make explicit presentation of appropriate language in the classroom.

9.4 Self-checks

1. The author suggests a three-step procedure for teaching speaking to EFL students. What are the differences among these steps in terms of the teacher's role, the student's role, and the teaching/learning materials?
2. The procedure suggested by the author for the teaching of speaking incorporates speaking with vocabulary, grammar, and phonics. Discuss.
3. Choose a speaking lesson from the textbook you use and teach it in light of the three-step procedure mentioned before. Discuss the results with your colleagues.

Chapter Ten
Reading

10.0 What is reading?

The skills-based approach views reading as a collection of separate skills, including phonics, word recognition, grammar, etc. Under the influence of this view, a number of reading specialists have extrapolated sets of micro-skills which they assume to be necessary for reading comprehension. In this regard, Gough (1972), like many others (e.g., Gough and Juel, 1991; LaBerge and Samuels, 1974), divides reading into two major components: (1) graphemic information and (2) phonemic patterns. Flood and Lapp (1991) separate reading into four major components: (1) knowledge of letters and sound correspondences, (2) knowledge of words and word forms, (3) knowledge of grammatical structures of sentences and their functions, and (4) knowledge of meanings and semantic relations. Similarly, Smith (1997) suggests that the mechanics of reading include: (1) basic vocabulary and syntactic competence, (2) recognizing letters, (3) pairing graphic shapes with sounds, and (4) recognizing words as smaller units of meaning and sentences as larger units of meaning. As a proponent of the skills-based approach, Randall (1996) views reading as decoding of visual symbols or letters and suggests that word recognition skills should be given a high priority within any reading course for EFL beginners. The whole-language approach adopts the opposite viewpoint that reading is an active process in which the reader constructs meaning from a written text. As Smith (1994) puts it:

> Identification or apprehension of meaning does not require the prior identification of words. Reading usually involves bringing meaning immediately or directly to the text without awareness of individual words or their possible alternative meanings. (p. 149)

The definition of reading, which in the author's opinion provides a sound theoretical base to develop reading in EFL students, must combine both skills and meaning. Such a standpoint is supported by the following extracts:

> [B]oth top-down and bottom-up processing, functioning interactively, are necessary to an adequate understanding of second language reading and reading comprehension. (Carrell, 1989, p. 4)

> I propose that both bottom-up and top-down reading processes are equally vital to the general process of reading, each in its own right. (Fritz, 1996, p. 38)

> Ignoring either top-down or bottom-up cues results in making the reading process more artificial and difficult than natural language processing, which is simultaneous and integrated. All levels of information are necessary to the process of reconstructing the author's message, and a disruption of any one level will have reciprocal effects on all levels. (Norris and Hoffman, 1993, p. 145)

> In many cases an efficient reader appears to use what are called 'top-down' and 'bottom-up'

strategies.... In other words, the top-down process interacts with the bottom-up process in order to aid comprehension. (McDonough and Shaw, 1993, p. 109)

10.1 The importance of reading

Reading English as a foreign language is very important for several reasons. First, it is a prerequisite to success in some academic majors such as medicine and engineering in Egyptian universities. Second, it is a useful source for information that might be missed in class lectures (Huckin and Bloch, 1993). Third, it can improve native language reading (Levine and Reves 1985). Fourth, it can accelerate foreign language learning and improve other language skills (Cohen, 1990; Harmer, 1998). Fifth, it is a major means of learning both vocabulary (Herman *et al.*, 1987; Nagy and Anderson, 1984; Nagy *et al.*, 1987) and spelling (Cunningham and Stanovich, 1990; Stanovich and West, 1989). Finally, reading is often needed for formal and informal testing.

10.2 The teaching and learning of reading

In skills-based classrooms, reading is taught sequentially as a set of discrete subskills. These subskills include distinguishing between isolated sounds in the foreign language, identifying the spelling of consonant sounds which are regularly represented by a combination of letters, identifying the pronunciation of the verb suffixes: --s, --es, --ed, identifying the pronunciation of the noun suffixes: --s, --'s, --s', identifying long and short vowels, contrasting hard and soft sounds, identifying vowel diphthongs, contrasting homophones (i.e., words that are identical in pronunciation but different in spelling, e.g., missed and mist), contrasting homographs (i.e., words that are identical in spelling but different in meaning and sometimes pronunciation, e.g., minute as very small and part of time), identifying commonly

confused and mispronounced words (e.g., accept, expect, and except), recognizing morphemic units (roots, prefixes, and suffixes), identifying syllables within words, dividing words into syllables, locating syllable boundaries within multisyllabic words, locating the accented syllables, determining the grammatical categories that words and phrases fall into, distinguishing between similar-sounding words, identifying stressed and unstressed syllables, identifying word-divisions, recognizing word order patterns in the target language, producing phonemes and blending them together into a word, etc. These subskills and many others are mastered individually through direct explanation, modeling and repetition. The mastery of each subskill is then measured by means of objective test items before moving to the next.

In whole language classrooms, reading is taught by reading whole texts in which all reading subskills are integrated and fully accessible to the learner. Advocates of this approach hold that language must be kept whole when it is read and that teachers make reading difficult "by breaking whole (natural) language into bitesize abstract little pieces" (Goodman, 1986, p. 7). They also hold that the ability to read evolves naturally out of students experiences in much the same way that oral language develops.

Opponents of the skills-based approach to teaching reading claim that fragmenting written language destroys or distorts meaning which is the ultimate goal of reading instruction (Anderson, 1984). They add that this approach is boring and may produce students who are bored and turned off to reading (Freeman and Freeman, 1992). On the other hand, opponents of the whole-language approach claim that focusing on whole language ignores decoding, which is central to reading comprehension. Adams (1990), for

example, considers decoding just like the gasoline for the car. She adds that without gas, the car cannot run, and without decoding, there is no reading comprehension. Eskey (1989) adds that even guessing at meaning is not a substitute for accurate decoding. Yorio (1971) asserts that accurate decoding is especially important to foreign language reading because "The [FL] reader's knowledge is not like that of the native speaker; the guessing or predicting ability necessary to pick up cues is hindered by the imperfect knowledge of the language" (p. 108). The following extracts also support the view that decoding is essential to reading comprehension:

> Individuals who are fluent decoders . . . generally comprehend written text better than those who are poor at decoding. In fact, inadequate decoding seems to be a hallmark of poor readers (Cartnine, Cartnine, and Gertsen, 1984, Lesgold and Curtis, 1981). Good decoders find it easier to comprehend written text than poor decoders simply because they have less difficulty in translating print into language. (Eldredge, 1995, p. 19)

> Poor decoding skill leads to little reading and little opportunity to increase one's basic vocabulary and knowledge, leaving a shaky foundation for later reading comprehension. (Gough and Juel, 1991, p. 55)

> Skilled readers have the ability to identify words fluently and effortlessly.... The process of identifying words becomes subservient to text meaning and overall understanding.... Clearly, proficiency in word identification is central to the reading act. (Mason, Herman, and Au, 1991, p. 722)

Reading

Research has also shown that poor decoders express a dislike for reading and read considerably less than the good decoders both in and out of school (Juel, 1988); and that there is a high correlation between decoding skills and reading comprehension (e.g., Boger, 1987; Lesgold and Resnick, 1982; Lesgold *et al.*, 1985; Perfetti, 1985).

In light of the previously-mentioned deficiencies of both the skills-based approach and the whole-language approach to teaching reading, it seems that both approaches are complementary, with one's strength being the other's weakness, and vice versa. It also seems that it would be unreasonable to use one of them to the exclusion of the other. Therefore, the author calls for a comprehensive approach that emphasizes both skills and meaning. That is, an approach in which skills and meaning operate as complements rather than substitutes for each other. According to this approach, any reading lesson should move from skills to meaning as follows:

(1) Presentation of reading skills. In this step, the teacher explains some new vocabulary, a new structure and a phonics rule. Such skills should be selected from the dialogue or passage students are going to read.

(2) Guided reading. In this step, students read a dialogue or passage. While reading, and under the guidance of their teacher, they focus on the meanings of the language items explained to them. They also guess the meanings of other language items from the context.

(3) Independent reading. In this step, each student independently reads a whole text which is compatible with his/her language competence. After that, he/she answers comprehension questions and discusses what he/she read with other students.

In any reading lesson, the teacher should move through all the previously-mentioned steps at the pre-secondary level. Accordingly, the materials utilized in these steps should be adapted to suit the students' proficiency level.

10.3 Summary of research on reading instruction

A review of research on reading instruction showed that although the skills-based approach and the whole-language approach have contrasting views, both have been valued by researchers as useful instructional approaches for developing reading comprehension. Some studies obtained positive results with the skills-based approach. These studies examined the mastery of certain subskills and their effect on reading achievement or comprehension. The results of such studies revealed that: (1) Training in phonemic awareness improved students' reading ability (e.g., Bradley and Bryant, 1983; Lundberg *et al.*, 1988; Olofsson and Lundberg, 1985; Treiman and Baron, 1983; Vellutino and Scanlon, 1987); (2) Explicit teaching of letter-sound correspondences facilitated reading acquisition (e.g., Anderson *et al.*, 1985; Williams, 1985); (3) Instruction in spelling had a strong positive effect on measures of beginning reading (e.g., Bradley, 1988; Bradley and Bryant, 1985; Uhry, 1989); (4) Vocabulary instruction improved reading comprehension (e.g., Cziko, 1980; Davis, 1989; McDaniel and Pressley, 1986); (5) Direct teaching of sentence combining improved reading comprehension (e.g., McAfee, 1981); (6) Teaching students about text structure improved their reading comprehension (e.g., Armbruster *et al.*, 1987; Carrell, 1985; Idol and Croll, 1987); (7) Inference training improved reading comprehension (e.g., Hansen, 1981; Hansen and Pearson, 1983).

A second group of studies reported that the whole-language approach was effective in improving reading

comprehension (e.g., Azwell, 1990; Crawford, 1995; Otero, 1993; Stasko, 1991; Stice and Bertrand, 1989).

A third group of studies revealed that the two instructional approaches resulted in an equivalent statistical effect on reading comprehension (e.g., Bitner, 1992; Ezell, 1995; Koch, 1993; Mercer, 1992; Wilson, 1998).

Viewed collectively, the above results provide indirect evidence for the position that a combination of the skills-based approach and the whole-language approach to teaching reading comprehension can meet the needs of students of all reading abilities and result in superior reading gains. It is also clear that the above results suggest that both skills and meaning are necessarily equal to reading comprehension. In this regard, Stahl and Miller (1989) suggest that the whole-language approach is more effective for teaching the functional aspects of reading such as print concepts, whereas direct instruction is better at helping students master word recognition skills. Direct support for the comprehensive approach to teaching reading comprehension comes from many practitioners and researchers all over the world (e.g., Batjes and Brown, 1997; California Department of Education 1987; Pressley, 1988; Pressley and Rankin, 1994).

10.4 Self-checks

1. Do you think that less competent readers can self-regulate their reading strategies to remediate comprehension failures? Why? Why not?
2. Take any piece of reading material from an EFL textbook and develop a plan of how you can teach it using the comprehensive approach procedure. Teach this plan to one of your classes and find out how interesting and/or useful it is.

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3. Interview some of your students to know their attitudes towards the comprehensive approach to teaching reading. Write a statement that details their attitudes.

Chapter Eleven
Writing

11.0 What is writing?

The skills-based approach views writing as a collection of separate skills, including letter formation, spelling, punctuation, grammar, organization, and the like. This approach also purports writing as a product-oriented task. In this respect, McLaughlin *et al.* (1983) state that writing, like many other complex tasks, requires that "learners organize a set of related subtasks and their components" (p. 42). In contrast, the whole-language approach views writing as a meaning-making process which is governed by purpose and audience rather than by compositional rules. From the author's point of view, a thorough definition of writing should involve both skills and meaning. This is precisely the perspective taken by Krashen (1984) who states:

> **Writing competence is necessary, but is not sufficient. Writers who are competent, who have acquired the code, may still be unable to display their competence because of inefficient composing processes. Efficient composing processes, writing "performance," can be developed via sheer practice as well as instruction. (p. 28)**

11.1 The importance of writing

In the area of EFL, writing has many uses and functions. To begin with, the ability to write acceptable scientific English is essential for post-graduate students who must write their dissertations in English. Moreover, writing EFL allows for communication to large numbers of people all over

the world. It also provides students with physical evidence of their achievement. This in turn helps them to determine what they know and what they don't know. As Irmscher (1979) notes, "In our minds, we can fool ourselves. Not on paper. If no thought is in our minds, nothing comes out. Mental fuzziness translates into words only as fuzziness or meaninglessness" (p. 20). Additionally, writing can enhance students' thinking skills. As Irmscher (1979) notes, "Writing stimulates thinking, chiefly because it forces us to concentrate and organize. Talking does, too, but writing allows more time for introspection and deliberation" (loc. cit.). Finally, writing can enhance students' vocabulary, spelling, and grammar.

11.2 The teaching and learning of writing

The skills-oriented teachers teach writing in fragmented pieces with the assumption that students cannot compose until they master the subskills that stem from writing. These subskills are taught explicitly through the use of techniques such as the following:

(1) Copying model compositions,

(2) Organizing a set of disorganized notes into topic areas with topic sentences and secondary points,

(3) Rearranging scrambled sentences to make up a paragraph,

(4) Predicting the method(s) of developing a topic sentence,

(5) Analyzing a passage with the help of questions such as the following:

-Which sentence states the main idea?

-What sentences directly support the main idea?

-What method did the writer use to develop the main idea?

(6) Filling in the missing connectives in a composition,

(7) Filling in the missing words or sentences in a composition,

(8) Combining a set of sentences to make up a composition,
(9) Writing topic sentences to given paragraphs,
(10) Reading a passage and answering the questions about it in complete sentences to make up a paragraph,
(11) Making a summary of a reading or listening passage using one's own words as far as possible,
(12) Rewriting a passage from another person's point of view,
(13) Changing a narrative into a dialog,
(14) Changing a dialog into a narrative, etc.

The whole language teachers teach writing by immersing students in the process of writing. In whole language classrooms, students write whole compositions and share them with the teacher or other people from the start (Reutzel and Hollingsworth, 1988). The following techniques are consistent with the whole language perspective:

(1) Dialogue journal writing

Dialogue journal is a long-term written conversation between a student and the teacher in or out of classroom. Students write on any topic and the teacher writes back to each student, making comments and offering opinions (Peyton and Reed, 1990). That is, teachers do not correct journals in the traditional sense. Rather they respond by asking questions and commenting on the content (Jenkinson, 1988). Such responses drive the process and endow the activity with meaning (Hennings, 1992). Atwell (1987) argues that the dialogue journal partner does not have to be the teacher and that students may be paired with each other. Rather than leaving dialogue journal topics completely open-ended, Walworth (1990) suggests that the teacher can use it to focus the discussion on a certain topic. In classes with word processors that are easily accessible to all students, Peyton and Reed (1990) suggest that the

journal may be on a disk passed back and forth and if schools have access to electronic mail, messages can be sent without the exchange of disks. Naiman (1988) adds that with access to computer networks, students can keep dialogue journals with other students in different parts of the world.

The benefits of dialogue journal writing include individualizing the teaching of writing, using writing and reading for real communication, making students more process-oriented, bridging the gap between speaking and writing, developing students' awareness of the real purposes of reading and writing, helping students become more relaxed as writers, promoting autonomous learning, improving vocabulary and punctuation skills, raising self-confidence, helping students become more fluent writers, and increasing opportunities for interaction between students and teachers and among students themselves (Hamayan, 1989; Peyton, 1990; Porter *et al.*, 1990; Steffensen, 1988; Wham and Lenski, 1994).

According to the author's point of view, the use of dialogue journals with EFL students should move from correspondence between student and teacher to correspondence among students themselves, and from controlled to open-ended topics.

(2) Dialogue letter writing

Letter writing is another technique for immersing students in writing to a real audience for a real purpose. Students use this technique when they want to communicate through writing with someone inside or outside the school. After writing their letters, students deliver or mail them for hope that they will be answered. Respondents accept students' letters and comment on meaning rather than on

form. Perhaps the most important reason for using letter writing is that students enjoy writing and receiving letters (Hall, 1994). In an effort to understand young children's abilities as letter writers, Hall, Robinson, and Grawford (1991) investigated whether or not very young native English-speaking children could sustain a letter-writing dialogue. Hall and Crawford wrote on an individual basis to all children in a class taught by Robinson. The researchers found that children, from the beginning, functioned totally efficiently and appropriately as correspondents. As the exchanges progressed, children showed that they could generate novel topics, sustain topics, and when appropriate, close topics. Droge (1995) also found that letter dialogue writing improved students' writing skills as well as their self-esteem.

(3) Process writing

Process writing refers to the process a writer engages in when constructing meaning. This process includes stages as pre-writing, writing and re-writing. The pre-writing stage involves planning, outlining, brainstorming, etc. The writing stage involves the actual wording and structuring of the information into written discourse. The re-writing stage involves proofreading, editing, etc. For additional coverage of process writing, see Barnett (1989), Flower and Hayes (1981), Hall (1993), Krashen (1984), Reid (1988), and Zamel (1983).

Opponents of the skills-based approach claim that the teaching of writing subskills is often uninteresting. As Rose (1982) points out, "Teachers themselves may have a distaste for the elements of grammar and punctuation" (p. 384). These opponents add that an overemphasis on writing conventions may get in the way of communicating meaning. As Newman (1985) puts it:

> An overemphasis on accurate spelling, punctuation, and neat handwriting can actually produce a situation in which children come to see the conventions of writing as more important than the meaning they are trying to convey. (p. 28)

On the other hand, opponents of the whole-language approach claim that students cannot convey meaning without writing conventions.

From the foregoing, it is clear that just like the skills-based approach, the whole-language approach is necessary, but not sufficient for writing acquisition. Therefore, the comprehensive approach suggests the following three basic steps as a procedure for teaching writing to foreign language students:

(1) Presentation of writing skills. In this step, the teacher explains some new vocabulary, a new structure, a punctuation rule and a spelling rule. Such skills should provide the basis for the other two steps.

(2) Guided writing. In this step, students read a model composition. Then, under the guidance of their teacher, they use the skills explained to them as well as the skills they acquired by themselves in summarizing this model composition or changing it from a narrative to a dialog or vice versa.

(3) Independent writing. In this step, each student independently writes a whole composition on a self-selected topic.

11.3 Summary of research on writing instruction

A review of research on writing instruction showed that although the skills-based approach and the whole-language approach have contrasting views, both have been valued by researchers as useful instructional approaches for developing

writing. Some studies obtained positive results with the skills-based approach. These studies examined the mastery of certain subskills and their effect on writing. The results of such studies revealed that: (1) Explicit story grammar instruction improved the narrative writing of average and below average students (e.g., EL-Koumy, 1999; Fitzgerald and Teasley, 1986; Gambrell and Chasen, 1991; Gordon and Braun, 1982, 1983; Leaman, 1993); (2) Explicit instruction in expository text structures had a positive effect on the quality of students' expository writing (e.g., Hiebert *et al.*, 1983; Murray, 1993; Taylor and Beach, 1984); (3) Explicit teaching of formal grammar improved the quality of students' writing (e.g., Govindasamy, 1995; Melendez, 1993; Neulieb and Brosnahan, 1987; Yeung, 1993); (4) Direct teaching of sentence combining improved the quality of students' writing (e.g., Abdan 1981; Combs, 1976; Cooper, 1981).

A second body of studies revealed that the whole-language approach improved students' writing (e.g., Agnew, 1995; Crawford, 1995· Cress, 1990; Loshbaugh, 1993; Lucas, 1988; Maguire. 1992. McLaughlin, 1994; Roberts, 1991).

A third body of studies revealed that the two instructional approaches resulted in an equivalent statistical effect on students' writing (e.g., Adair-Hauck, 1994; Shearer, 1992).

The research reviewed above provides indirect evidence that a combination of both the skills-based approach and the whole-language approach can boost students' writing above the levels that occur with either alone. Direct support of this comprehensive approach comes from studies done by Jones (1995) and Nagle (1989). Jones (1995) compared the effects of an eclectic approach versus a whole-language approach on the writing skills of first grade students. She found that the eclectic approach resulted in statistically significant writing

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skills' scores than the whole-language approach. Nagle (1989) compared the stories written by students in five first grade classes being taught by a whole language/process approach, a traditional approach, and a combination of both. She found that "the mean scores were consistently higher in classes with teachers that integrated the holistic and traditional teaching methods as compared to classes being taught in a more holistic or a more traditional setting" (p. 72).

11.4 Self-checks

1. **Writing EFL has many uses and functions. Discuss.**
2. **Overreliance on either the skills-based approach or the whole-language approach can cause writing difficulties for foreign language learners. Discuss.**
3. **Studies done in the area of writing support the author's comprehensive approach. Discuss.**

Part Three

Integrating Main Language Skills with Each Other

Chapter Twelve
Integrating Listening with Speaking

12.1 Introduction

Influenced by the neuropsychologists who hold that comprehension is located in one area of the brain and production in another, the skill-building theorists (e.g., Bates *et al.*, 1988; Byrnes, 1984; Nord, 1980; Snyder *et al.*, 1981; Wipf, 1984)) claim that listening and speaking are independent behaviors. They further claim that the teaching of listening should precede the teaching of speaking. As Byrnes (1984) points out, "Listening comprehension precedes production in all cases of language learning, and there can be no production unless linguistic input was provided and became comprehensible intake for a listener" (pp. 318-319). On the other hand, whole language proponents, among other language educators, claim that listening and speaking are interdependent (e.g., Cutler, 1987; Mackay *et al.*, 1987; Temple and Gillet, 1984). They further claim that both skills (listening and speaking) should be taught simultaneously. As Temple and Gillet (1984) put it:

> **Listening cannot be separated from the expressive aspects of oral communication. It is impossible to "teach listening" separately from speaking, or to set aside a portion of the instructional time for listening instruction and ignore it the rest of the time. Listening is as much a part of group discussions, dramatic play, or puppetry, for example, as the dialogues and actions created. When children develop their communicative**

powers they also develop their ability to listen appreciately and receptively. (p. 70)

Cutler (1987) supports the same view saying:

> Speech production is constrained at all levels by the demands of speech perception...the production of an utterance is constrained by factors which have more to do with the nature of the listener's perceptual process than with the nature of the production process itself. (p. 23)

Mackay *et al.* (1987) also emphasize the close relationship between listening and speaking in this way:

> Language perception and production are intimately related and difficult to separate operationally. Every speaker is simultaneously a listener, and every listener is at least potentially a speaker. From an evolutionary perspective as well, language perception and production are virtually inseparable: the capacities for perceiving and producing speech could only have evolved simultaneously.... (p. 2)

The comprehensive approach holds that listening and speaking are related in some aspects but different in others. They are related in that both are aspects of oral communication. They are different in that listening is meaning-abstracting while speaking is meaning-generating. Furthermore, unlike listeners, speakers can control the scope and difficulty of utterances. Therefore, the teacher should move towards the integration of both skills after focusing on each skill's unique characteristics.

Integrating Listening with Speaking

12.2 Summary of research on listening-speaking relationship

A review of research on the relationship between listening and speaking revealed that some studies support the view that the two skills are independent behaviors (e.g., Holtz, 1994; Huttenlocher, 1974; Rescorla, 1980); whereas other studies offer support for the view that the same skills are interdependent (e.g., Brown *et al.*, 1988, cited in Anderson and Lynch, 1988; Smolak, 1982).

The research reviewed above provides indirect support for the author's view that listening and speaking are related in some aspects but different in others. Therefore, the comprehensive approach holds that the differences between listening and speaking need to be addressed before stressing the commonalities between them.

12.3 Techniques for integrating listening with speaking

The techniques for integrating listening with speaking, according to the comprehensive approach, should move from teacher-student interaction to student-student interaction as students advance in a listening/speaking lesson in particular, and the target language in general.

12.3.1 Teacher-student interaction

The teacher-student interaction is based on the teacher's superior knowledge. This superiority, however, does not prohibit effective interaction in language classrooms (Comeau, 1987). Teachers can interact with their students through the use of scaffolds. These scaffolds are temporary supports that teachers provide for students to stimulate their language development to higher levels (Eldredge, 1995; Rosenshine and Guenther, 1992; Scarcella and Oxford, 1992). Teacher questions have been the most widely used technique for scaffolding language learning. In this

respect, Daly *et al.* (1994) point out that in classrooms, questions take up a significant portion of the day. Dillon (1981) adds that across all grade levels, approximately 70% of the average school day interaction is occupied with questions. However, Chaudron (1988) claims that teachers' questions may be either helpful or inhibiting of interaction. To encourage student interaction, Udall and Daniels (1991) suggest that teachers' questions should be open-ended and that wait time should be at least ten seconds. Carlsen (1991) suggests that teachers should ask challenging questions rather than rote memory ones to encourage students to take part in classroom interaction. Nunan (1989) notes that "in contrast with interactions in the world outside, classroom interaction is characterized by the use of display questions to the almost total exclusion of referential questions" (p. 29). According to van Lier (1988), the distinction between instructional questions and conversational ones is not their referential or display nature, but rather their eliciting nature. He wrote:

> **Such [display] questions have the professed aim of providing comprehensible input, and of encouraging 'early production'. I suggest that, by and large, what gives such question series their instructional, typically L2-classroom character is not so much that they are display rather than referential, but that they are made with the aim of eliciting language from the learners. (p. 222)**

According to the comprehensive approach, the teacher should move from display to referential questions and from closed questions to open-ended ones. The comprehensive approach also suggests that teacher scaffolds should be gradually withdrawn, as students progress in any lesson in

particular and the target language in general to allow them to interact with one another.

12.3.2 Student-student interaction

Student-student interaction can play an important role in developing both listening and speaking. This type of interaction can be carried out by involving students in cooperative learning. Quoting Long and Porter (1985) and McGroary (1988), Ford (1991) outlines the advantages of cooperative learning in the following way:

> **Cooperative learning provides students with greater opportunities to: 1) interact with each other, 2) negotiate for meaning, 3) work in a variety of projects that are of interest to them, 4) participate in real-world communicative activities more frequently than in traditional teacher-fronted classrooms. (p. 45)**

Additional advantages of cooperation in second/foreign language learning include more student talk, more varied talk, more relaxed atmosphere, greater motivation, increased amount of comprehensible input, higher self-esteem and confidence, decreased prejudice, and increased respect for others (Christison, 1990; Olsen and Kagan, 1992).

In order for student-student interaction to be effective, educators suggest that teachers should pay careful attention to the following factors:

12.3.2.1 Group composition

There has been considerable discussion surrounding the question of what constitutes a successful group. Some educators (e.g., Barr *et al.*, 1995; Hiebert, 1983; Mathes

and Fuchs, 1994; Topping, 1998) suggest that students should be grouped by their ability levels. The effects of group ability composition on learning efficiency and interaction were examined in many studies. Varonis and Gass (1983, cited in Long and Porter, 1985) found that most negotiation of meaning occurred when learners were of different language backgrounds and of different proficiency levels. Nation (1985) found that learners in a homogeneous, low-proficiency group had more equal spoken participation than learners in mixed groups. Porter (1986) found that ESL learners got more and better-quality input from advanced learners than from intermediates, suggesting an advantage for practice with a higher-level partner from the perspective of quality and quantity of input. Based on this finding, she recommends that teachers should pair students of differing proficiency levels in the ESL classroom. Hooper and Hannafin (1988) found that heterogeneous grouping increased the achievement of low-ability students by approximately 50% compared to their homogeneously grouped peers. In contrast, homogeneous grouping increased the achievement of high-ability students by approximately 12% compared to their heterogeneously grouped counterparts. In another study, the same investigators (Hooper and Hannafin, 1991) investigated the effects of cooperative group composition and student ability on interaction, instructional efficiency, and achievement during computer-based instruction. The results showed that: (1) low-ability students interacted more in heterogeneous than in homogeneous groups; (2) high-ability students completed the instruction more efficiently in homogeneous than heterogeneous groups; and (3) cooperation was significantly related to achievement for heterogeneous ability groups, but not for either homogeneous high- or low-ability students.

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However, ability grouping, as McGreal (1989) states, can cause problems when inferior students find out who they are. Abadzi (1984) asserts that ability grouping hurts lower ranking students. Oakes (1985) also contends that students in the lower track are usually seen by others as dumb and also see themselves in this way. Therefore, other educators (e.g., Bauder and Milman, 1990; Klavas, 1993; Neely and Alm, 1993; Pankratius, 1997) suggest that students should be grouped by their learning style. In the learning style literature, some theoreticians (e.g., Dunn and Dunn, 1993, 1999) suggest that students should be homogeneously grouped by their own preferred learning style. These theoreticians hold that learning style homogeneity allows students to learn most effectively, efficiently, easily, and with greatest enjoyment. However, such a grouping technique may lead to a narrow group focus and predispose groupthink. Other learning style theoreticians (e.g., Bonham, 1989; Kathleen, 1993) suggest that students should be grouped heterogeneously. These theoreticians hold that learning style heterogeneity helps learners to expand the learning styles with which they do not feel comfortable and best fit the content. However, such a grouping technique may disrupt positive relations among group members which can, in turn, negatively affect their performance. Unfortunately, no studies have sought to determine which one of these two types of learning style grouping better affects students' oral language. Research in this area was only concerned with investigating the effects of matching/mismatching learning styles with teaching styles and exploring the relationship between isolated learning styles and reading achievement or comprehension (e.g., Davey, 1990; Eitington, 1989; Rosa, 1991; Stiles, 1986).

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In light of the foregoing discussion, the comprehensive approach holds that groups should be of mixed learning styles. Such a method of grouping would provide a richer pool of students who have varied knowledge and ideas that help in promoting classroom interaction.

12.3.2.2 Individual accountability

Many educators suggest that individual accountability promotes student-student interaction and helps avoid loafing by less active or less able students (Hooper *et al.*, 1989; Jacobs, 1987). Such an individual accountability as Fandt *et al.* (1993) suggest, "can be created either by task structure, reward structure, or some combinations of the two" (p. 114).

12.3.2.3 Learning tasks

The tasks assigned to group members also influence their interaction with one another (van Lier, 1988). For group or peer involvement in interaction, some educators (e.g., King, 1989; Palincsar and Brown, 1988; Sadow, 1987) suggest the use of problem solving tasks to promote interaction and divergent thinking. In the same vein, other educators (e.g., Palincsar *et al.*, 1990) suggest that open-ended problems provide greater opportunities for collaboration than do closed problems.

12.3.2.4 Group size

With respect to group size, there is a remarkable agreement that small groups have advantages over large groups. According to Johnson *et al.* (1984), small groups take less time to get organized. It's also very difficult to drop out of a small group (Kohn, 1987; Vermette, 1998). Also, learning in small groups, as Hertz-Lazarowitz, Sharan and Steinberg (1980) state, "provides for the acquisition of social skills needed for sustaining

cooperative interaction" (p. 105). In contrast, large groups, as Dansereau (1987) states, "are more likely to result in the formation of coalitions and passivity on the part of some students" (p. 618). Additionally, in a recent study, Bada and Okan (2000) have found that Turkish students at the ELT Department, Faculty of Education, Cukurova University, do not like working in large groups. They conclude from this study that "students feel more comfortable, productive and relaxed by working...in pairs, where their voices would be heard, and views listened to and valued" (p. 4). Studies done by Long and Bulgarella (1985) have also led them to conclude that

> Interaction in small groups is desirable because it leads to clashes of points of view that encourage children's development of individuality, creativity, and ability to think. (p. 171)

12.3.2.5 Self-assessment

In order to improve student-student interaction in group work, some educators (e.g., Angelo and Cross, 1993; Rendon, 1995) suggest that each student should self-assess what he/she learned from the members of the group and what the other group members learned from him/her. Such educators claim that this type of assessment helps learners participate actively in group interaction.

12.4 Self-checks

1. Develop an oral lesson plan that moves from teacher-student to student-student interaction as noted in this chapter. Teach it to your students and discuss the results with your colleagues.
2. In one of your classrooms, assign students into high-, middle-, and low-ability groups and engage them in a

collaborative oral activity. Note down the amount of conversational interaction generated in each of the three groups.

3. **Interview some teachers to know their rationale for using or not using ability grouping in their teaching of English as a foreign language.**

Integrating Listening with Speaking

Chapter Thirteen
Integrating Reading with Writing

13.1 Introduction

Influenced by the neuropsychologists who hold that comprehension is located in one area of the brain and production in another, advocates of the skills-based approach claim that reading and writing are parallel and independent aspects of language. That is, the two skills are linguistically and pedagogically different from each other. The following extracts show this point of view:

> **In child language, both observational and research evidence point to the "superiority" of comprehension over production: children understand "more" than they actually produce. For instance, a child may understand a sentence with an embedded relative in it, but not be able to produce one. (Brown, 1987, pp. 26-27).**

> **The primary difference between the two activities [reading and writing] is that writing depends on more detailed analyzed knowledge. The required degree of analyzed knowledge about sound-spelling relationships is greater when expressively spelling words than when receptively recognizing them. Similarly, vague notions of discourse structure may be adequate to interpret written texts but are decidedly inadequate to produce it. (Bialystock and Ryan, 1985, pp. 224-225).**

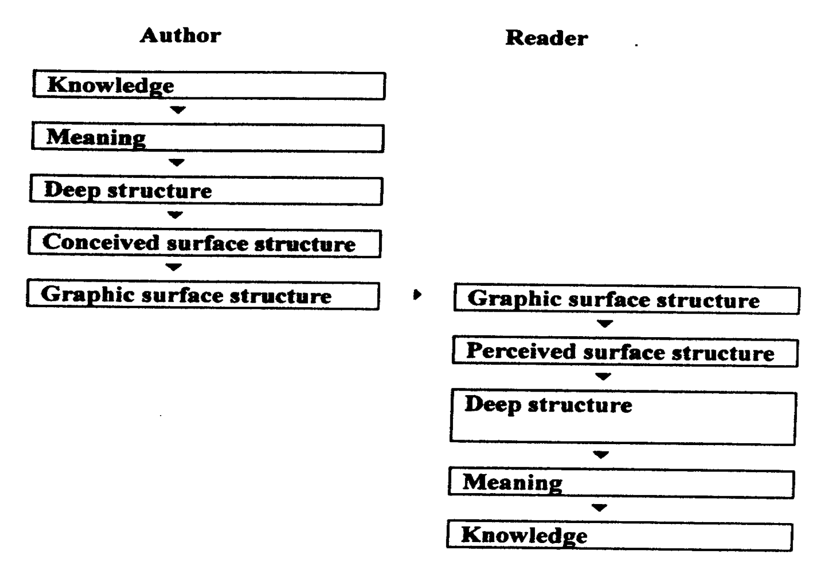
Integrating Reading with Writing

> The receptive skill of reading is much more easily acquired and more easily retained than the productive skill of writing. But the learning of reading also has special characteristics that relate to its institutional or langue nature. The learner must know how to respond as a reader to writing of many different types, of many different degrees of difficulty, recorded at different times and in different places. Writing, on the contrary, like speaking, is a highly personal affair, in which the learner must respect all the mandatory features of the target language code as it appears when written, while at the same time being permitted and encouraged to exploit the volitional and creative aspects of the new language to the extent that his ability and his experience permit. (Brooks, 1964, p. 167).

In a similar vein, some educators claim that a writer and a reader of a text follow inverse cognitive processes (e.g., Beaugrande, 1979; Page, 1974; Yoos, 1979). More specifically, they claim that writers encode meaning, whereas readers decode it. Figure 1 represents Page's view (1974) in this point (p. 176).

Integrating Reading with Writing

Figure 1: Page's view of reading and writing



The previously-mentioned standpoint resulted in treating reading and writing as separate entities in the classrooms as well as in language arts curricula at all levels. Furthermore, most of the empirical studies related to these skills, as Reid (1993) states, "progressed so independently for the past twenty years" (p. 43).

On the other hand, advocates of the whole-language approach, among others, argue that both reading and writing are potentially equal and integrated. Some (e.g., Norris and Hoffman, 1993; Taylor, 1981) view the subskills of reading and writing as virtually the same. Figure 2, for example, represents Taylor's view (1981) in this point (pp. 30-31).

Figure 2: Taylor's subskills of reading and writing

Reading	Writing
Identifying the main idea	Formulating and phrasing the main idea
Finding support for the main idea	Supporting the main idea
Recognizing the sequence of sentences	Linking sentences to achieve coherence
Drawing inferences	Shaping inferences
Following organization of ideas and events	Arranging ideas and events in the logical order
Differentiating fact from opinion	Supporting an opinion with facts
Recognizing organizational patterns	Using appropriate organizational patterns
Drawing conclusions from ideas, stated or inferred	Writing deductively
Drawing conclusions from detail	Writing inductively
Detecting causal relationships	Analyzing a causal chain

In the same vein, Bartholomae and Petrosky (1986), Janopoulos (1986), Rosenblatt (1988), and Sternglass (1986) describe reading and writing as similar patterns of thinking; Singh (1989) and Squire (1983) see them as two aspects of

the same activity; Flood and Lapp (1987) and Morris (1981) view them as mutually reinforcing interactive processes. Furthermore, Tierney and colleagues (1981, 1983) hold that reading and writing activate schemata about the content and form of the topic which consequently influence what is produced or understood.

In line with the assumption that reading and writing are interdependent, some language teaching theoreticians assert that the teaching of reading involves the teaching of writing and vice versa. As Kenneth and Yetta Goodman (1983) note, "...people not only learn to read by reading and write by writing but they also learn to read by writing and write by reading" (p. 592).

The comprehensive approach holds that there are differences and similarities between reading and writing. Unlike writing which is meaning-generating, reading is meaning-abstracting. On the other hand, readers and writers alike use a variety of cognitive and metacognitive strategies in order to achieve their goals. Therefore, reading should be taught separately from writing at the beginning of foreign language learning to stress the unique properties of each skill. Then, both skills should be integrated at the intermediate level to stress the commonalties between them.

13.2 Summary of research on reading-writing relationship

A review of research on the relationship between reading and writing revealed that some studies support the view that the two skills are independent behaviors (e.g., Evans, 1979; Fuller, 1974; Perry, 1980; Siedow, 1973); whereas other studies offer support for the view that the two skills are interdependent (e.g., Acuna, 1986; Balkiewicz, 1992; D'Angelo, 1977; Flahive and Bailey, 1993; Hill, 1982; Holtz, 1988; Hulett, 1986; Kane, 1983; Popplewell, 1984). Similarly,

some studies showed that training in writing produced positive effects on reading (e.g., Denner *et al.*, 1989; Donohue, 1985; Kelley, 1984; Zuckermann, 1987); whereas other studies indicated that writing instruction did not lead to improvement in reading (e.g., Frey, 1993).

In light of the experimental literature reviewed above, there is indirect evidence that there are differences and similarities between reading and writing. Direct support for the author's view comes from Webster and Ammon 's (1994) study which revealed that there are some skills specific to reading and others common to both reading and writing.

13.3 Classroom activities for integrating reading with writing

Reading-writing integration can be implemented in the EFL classroom through the following activities:

(1) Reading-to-write activities. Such activities can be divided into the following three stages:
- **(a) Pre-reading activities, e.g.,**
  Asking students to write their own questions, thoughts, and associations about the theme of the text before they read it.
- **(b) While-reading activities, e.g.,**
  Asking students to take notes while reading.
- **(c) Post-reading activities, e.g.,**
  Asking students to write summaries, syntheses and critiques about what they have read.

(2) Writing-to-read activities. Such activities can be divided into the following three stages:
- **(a) Pre-writing activities, e.g.,**
  Asking students to read materials that teach various organizational patterns before writing.
- **(b) While-writing activities, e.g.,**
  Asking students to pause to scan and read during writing.

(c) Post-writing activities, e.g.,
Asking students to read each other's writing and respond to it.

13.4 Self-checks

1. **Develop a lesson plan that integrates reading with writing.**
2. **The position taken by the author is that the separation of reading and writing is necessary in the early stages of foreign language learning. Do you agree with him? Why? Why not?**
3. **Do you think that writing and reading develop reciprocally and directly affect each other? Why? Why not?**

Chapter Fourteen
Integrating Speaking with Writing

14.1 Introduction

Advocates of the skills-based approach take the position that speaking and writing are completely different. The following extracts show some of the differences between these skills:

> **It is generally acknowledged that written and oral communication involve very different kinds of strategies: what works orally does not work in print, and vice versa. We know the reasons for this discrepancy, at least in part: oral communication works through the assumption immediacy, or spontaneity; writing on the other hand is planned, organized, and non-spontaneous. (Lakoff, 1982, p. 239)**

> **Ordinary speech, unlike the written word, contains many ungrammatical, reduced, or incomplete forms. It also contains hesitations, false starts, repetitions, fillers, and pauses, all of which make up 30-50% of any conversation (Oxford, 1990). (Oxford, 1993, p. 206)**

> **The fact that writing is a slow, deliberate, editable process, whereas speaking is done on the fly leads to a difference that I called the integrated quality of written language as opposed to the fragmented quality of spoken. The fact that writing is a lonely**

> activity whereas speaking typically takes place in an environment of social interaction causes written language to have a detached quality that contrasts with the involvement of spoken language. (Chafe, 1985, p. 105)

For other differences between spoken and written language, see Graesser *et al.* (1991), Horowitz and Samuels (1987), Kamhi and Catts (1989), Mazzie (1987), and Rader (1982).

The above position resulted in treating speaking and writing as separate entities in the classroom as well as in language arts curricula.

On the other hand, advocates of the whole-language approach, among other language theoreticians, assume that speaking and writing are equal and integrated (e.g., Goodman, 1986; Johnson, 1989; Myers, 1987). One reason for this assumption is that both oral and written language come from the same source which is one's communicative competence. A second reason is that writing and speaking are productive modes of the language and employ many of the same faculties (Larson and Jones, 1983). A third reason, as Magnan (1985) notes, is that "writing is sometimes the only possible form for 'speech' ... [and] speech is the most feasible form for 'writing'" (p. 117). A final reason is that writing involves talking to oneself which is considered one of the characteristics of effective speakers (Klein, 1977).

In line with the above assumption, some language teaching theoreticians assert that speaking and writing should be taught simultaneously and that involvement in the meaningful and communicative use of language is central for the development of both skills.

Integrating Speaking with Writing

The comprehensive approach holds that although speaking and writing are different in some aspects, they share others. They are different in that a speaker uses intonation, stress patterns, and facial expressions to convey information, whereas a writer conveys information through words and writing conventions. In other words, the speaker uses the sound (phonemic) system, whereas the writer uses the print (graphemic) system. They are similar in that both speakers and writers create meaning. Therefore, the author's position is that the unique properties of each skill should be taught first before focusing on the elements common to both.

14.2 Summary of research on speaking-writing relationship

Research on the speaking-writing relationship yielded two sets of findings. One set showed that speaking and writing are different forms and/or not correlated (e.g., Hildyard and Hidi, 1985; Lee, 1991; Mazzie, 1987; Redeker, 1984; Sweeney, 1993). The other set showed that speaking and writing are similar forms and/or correlated (e.g., Abu-Humos, 1993; Cooper, 1982; Negm, 1995; Tannen, 1982a and b).

The research reviewed above provides indirect support for the author's position that there are similarities and differences between speaking and writing.

14.3 Classroom activities for integrating speaking with writing

Speaking-writing integration can be implemented in the EFL classroom through many activities. Among these activities are the following:

(1) Asking students to write down sentences in the way they are spoken,
(2) Asking students to discuss the topic they are going to write about,

(3) Asking students to discuss what they have written in pairs or groups,
(4) Asking students to orally narrate the stories they have written,
(5) Giving writing assignments in which students can manipulate features of voice such as stories, dialogues, letters, etc.

14.4 Self-checks

1. Do you think that students should be aware of the differences between written and spoken discourse? Why? Why not?
2. Compare the spoken and written versions of a certain content. Note down the similarities and differences between them.
3. The author thinks that writing and speaking are partially independent from each other. Do you agree with him? Why? Why not?

Chapter Fifteen
Integrating Listening with Reading

15.1 Introduction

Advocates of the skills-based approach (e.g., Anderson and Lapp, 1979; Hildyard and Olson, 1982; Leu, 1982; Rubin, 1980) take the position that listening and reading are independent and parallel skills. They further claim that listening comprehension ordinarily precedes reading comprehension. In Contrast, advocates of the whole-language approach, among other language teaching theorists, take the position that reading and listening are interrelated (e.g., Bromley, 1988; Carlisle, 1991; Omanson *et al.*, 1984; Sticht and James, 1984). In support of this unitary comprehension view, Brassard (1970) a long time ago stated that

> **Listening and reading obviously are interrelated communication skills. They are similar in that the receiver relies on his background experience and vocabulary to interpret stimuli presented through oral and written channels. (p. 1)**

The comprehensive approach holds that while there are areas for interrelating instruction in listening and reading, each embodies some subskills which must be learned and developed separately. The two skills are related in that readers and listeners use their own language background and experience to understand the message of the speaker or the writer. They are different in that the listener must cope with verbal and nonverbal messages, whereas the reader must cope with verbal messages alone (Oxford, 1993; Rost, 1992). They are also different in that readers, unlike listeners, are

capable of control over the input, and can dwell upon parts of the text, review others, and slow down when the information is dense or difficult. (McClelland, 1987). Supporting the comprehensive view, Rubin (1982) states:

> Although there are many common factors involved in the decoding of reading and listening—which would account for the relationship between the two areas—listening and reading are, nonetheless, separated by unique factors. (p. 67)

Supporting the same view, Danks and End (1987) state:

> So, to the question, "Are listening and reading processes the same or different," the answer is, "Both." Listening and reading are the same in that both are language comprehension processes that have available to them the same set of strategies to accomplish the task of comprehension. They differ to the extent that the cognitive demands imposed by text characteristics, situational factors, and cognitive skills available to the comprehender result in different processing strategies being heuristic. (p. 291)

With the above views in mind, the author claims that the two skills should be taught separately at the beginning of learning English as a foreign language to develop the properties specific to each skill. Then, the teacher can move towards the integration and unification of the two skills to develop the properties common to both. In doing so, the comprehensive approach stresses the shared qualities as well as the uniqueness of each skill.

Integrating Listening with Reading

15.2 Summary of research on listening-reading relationship

In reviewing the studies relevant to the area of the listening-reading relationship, the author found that some studies revealed that listening and reading are different forms and/or not correlated (e.g., Brown and Hayes, 1985; Curd, 1984; Levesque, 1989; Lund, 1991; Royer *et al.*, 1986, 1990); whereas other studies indicated that the two skills are similar and/or correlated (e.g., Berger, 1978; Carr *et al.*, 1985; Favreau and Segalowitz, 1983; Nuwash, 1997; Travis, 1983). Similarly, some studies showed that training in listening improved reading skills (e.g., Brooks, 1986, 1990; Lemons and Moore, 1982; Mccaulley, 1992; Seaton and Wielan, 1980); whereas other studies did not show significant gains in reading comprehension after training in listening (e.g., Beck, 1985; Miller, 1988; Weisenbach, 1989).

Viewed collectively, the empirical literature reviewed in this chapter provides indirect support for the comprehensive view that there are differences and similarities between listening and reading. Direct support for this approach comes from studies which showed that listening and reading are equivalent for specific proficiency levels, but not for others (Brown and Hayes, 1985; Miller and Smith, 1990). This, in turn, suggests the use of the comprehensive approach to stress the differences between listening and reading before integrating both skills at a higher level.

15.3 Classroom activities for integrating listening with reading

Listening-reading integration can be implemented in the EFL classroom through many activities. Among these activities are the following:

(1) Having students listen to a model reading of what they are going to read,

(2) Having students read silently while listening to the teacher,

(3) Having students read aloud and listen to themselves,
(4) Having students listen to a model reading of what they have just read,
(5) Providing students with multiple choice and or true/false questions and asking them to check answers as they listen or immediately afterwards, etc.

15.4 Self-checks

1. The author thinks that teachers cannot use listening to support reading or vice versa unless students know the differences between the two skills? Do you agree with him? Why? Why not?
2. What are the metacognitive strategies you think listeners and readers use?
3. While similarities exist between listening and reading, there are a number of differences between them. Discuss.

Part Five

Integrating All Language Skills

Chapter Sixteen
Integrating All Language Skills

16.1 Introduction

Advocates of the skills-based approach (e.g., Boyle, 1987; Hughes and Woods, 1981; Swinton and Powers, 1980) take the position that language is divisible and needs to be fractionated and broken down into separate, discrete elements for the purpose of instruction. They further claim that if each language skill is practiced and mastered individually, the unitary nature of language would emerge as an outgrowth of such instruction. On the other hand, advocates of the whole-language approach, among other educators and applied linguists, take the position that language is unitary (e.g., Farris, 1989; Lapp and Flood, 1992; Lundsteen, 1989; McDonough and Shaw, 1993). McDonough and Shaw (1993), for example, state:

> **If we look around us in our daily lives we can see that we rarely use language skills in isolation but in conjunction ...and, even though the classroom is clearly not the same as "real life," it could be argued that part of its function is to replicate it. If one of the jobs of the teacher is to make the students "communicatively competent" in L2, then this will involve more than being able to perform in each of the four skills separately. By giving learners tasks which expose them to these skills in conjunction, it is possible that they will gain deeper understanding of how communication works in the foreign language as well as becoming more motivated when they see the value of performing**

meaningful tasks and activities in the classroom. (pp. 201-202)

Whole language theoreticians also claim that all language skills have graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic characteristics in common. They add that language presents a totality which cannot be broken down into isolated skills. However, as mentioned in chapter one, it is the height of unreasonableness to integrate all language skills from the very beginning of foreign language learning. Therefore, the comprehensive approach shifts to total integration of all language skills at the university level. At this level, total integration can be successfully carried out through literature-based activities as those mentioned below.

16.2 Classroom activities for integrating all language skills through literature

Literature can be used to develop all language skills through activities such as the following:

(1) Asking students to dramatize parts of what they have read,
(2) Asking students to discuss what they have read,
(3) Asking students to write extensions of events or scenes,
(4) Asking students to rewrite prose fiction into dialogue, etc.

16.3 Self-checks

1. Is foreign language proficiency divisible, unitary, or both?
2. Take any chapter from a novel you are reading or familiar with and think of how it could be used for teaching all language skills.
3. Do you think that all language skills can be integrated from the very beginning of foreign language learning? Give your reasons.

Part Six

Error Correction and Assessment

Chapter Seventeen
Error Correction

17.1 Local correction

Drawing on the behaviorist view of learning, advocates of the skills-based approach view errors as sins which should be eliminated at all cost. They believe that all errors should be locally and immediately corrected for fear that learners may become habituated to their own errors. As Larsen-Freeman (1986) states, "It is important to prevent learners from making errors. Errors lead to the formation of bad habits. When errors do occur, they should be immediately corrected by the teacher" (p. 40). Such a local correction technique is always directed at bits and pieces of students' language. Correction, according to this technique, is done by providing the student with the correct form. Then, the student repeats this correct form several times. Opponents of this technique claim that it encourages students to focus on bits and pieces of language rather than meaning. Another disadvantage is that this technique consumes teachers' time. A final disadvantage is that this technique intimidates language learners.

17.2 Global correction

Drawing on the cognitivist view of learning, some advocates of the whole-language approach, among others, propose that teachers should respond to only errors that cause a listener or reader to misunderstand or not to comprehend a message. Such advocates claim that the correction of global errors develops students' communicative ability and increases their motivation to learn the language.

Although this technique encourages students to concentrate on meaning, it sacrifices accuracy for the sake of fluency.

17.3 No correction

Whole-language purists, among others, propose no correction at all. Such purists claim that students' errors are natural and are supposed to disappear gradually through communication and self-correction. The most obvious advantage of this technique is that it does not intimidate language learners (Truscott, 1996). However, opponents of this technique claim that it sacrifices quality for the sake of quantity. As Hammerly (1991) puts it:

> **The opinion that no error needs to be corrected in the SL classroom is preposterous, and the end result of that practice is sadly obvious. Up to a point there is general improvement with little or no correction. But in the classroom, that point represents minimal (i.e. survival) SL competence. (p. 91)**

17.4 A comprehensive approach to error correction

The comprehensive approach holds that teachers should move from local to global and finally to no error correction in every lesson during the integration of subsidiary skills with main language skills and vice versa, i.e., from correcting errors related to the subskill(s) being drilled in step 1 to correcting global errors in step 2, and finally to no correction in step 3. During the stages of integrating each two main skills and all language skills, the teacher should correct no errors at all. This approach capitalizes on both skills and meaning of language. It is also consistent with the three-step procedure suggested for teaching subsidiary and main language skills (see parts 2 and 3 in this book) as well as the other stages of the comprehensive approach.

17.5 Summary of research on error correction

Some studies revealed that local error correction improved language accuracy (e.g., Carroll and Swain, 1993; Gaydos, 1991; Jenkins *et al.*, 1983). Other studies indicated that local error correction did not lead to an improvement in language performance (e.g., DeKeyser, 1993). Still other studies indicated that correcting local errors in one group and global errors in another did not make a difference in students' language proficiency (e.g., Hendrickson, 1977).

The results of the studies reviewed above provide little support one way or the other. Therefore, it is best to use the comprehensive approach to error correction. I claim that this approach can be effective with different learners in different situations.

17.6 Self-checks

1. **Try to find out how your students feel about your error correction practice in the classroom.**
2. **Do you think that errors can disappear gradually through communication? Why? Why not?**
3. **What should feedback be mainly on: form, content, or both?**

Chapter Eighteen
Assessment

18.1 Discrete-point assessment

From the skill-building perspective, assessment is directed at discrete language components such as phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, and the like (Dieterich and Freeman, 1979). Such components are usually measured by quantitative measures (e.g., multiple choice, true or false, and fill in the blanks). The major advantage of this type of assessment is that it covers a wide variety of instructional objectives. Another advantage is that it is most valid and reliable. However, opponents of discrete-point assessment claim that this type of assessment is not authentic because it yields information about minute elements of the language, not about language use in real life situations. As Oller (1979) a long time ago pointed out:

> **Discrete point analysis necessarily breaks the elements of language apart and tries to teach them (or test them) separately with little or no attention to the way those elements interact in a larger context of communication. What makes it ineffective as a basis for teaching or testing languages is that crucial properties of language are lost when its elements are separated. (p. 212)**

Another argument against discrete-point assessment is that it fails to assess higher-order thinking and learning processes (Haney and Madaus, 1989; Neill and Medina, 1989; O'Neil, 1992; Wiggins, 1989). Still another argument is that this type of assessment does not require students to demonstrate the

full range of their abilities (Goodman, 1986). A final argument against this type of assessment is that it encourages rote memorization of bits and pieces of language.

18.2 Global assessment

Realizing that the whole is more than the sum of its parts and that discrete-point assessment is an inadequate indicator of language proficiency, whole language advocates, among other language assessment theoreticians, called for the use of global assessment (e.g., Antonacci, 1993; Cambourne and Turbill, 1990; Norris and Hoffman, 1993; Teale, 1988; Weaver, 1990). This type of assessment uses qualitative measures such as written reports, interviews, projects, portfolios, conversations, observations, and journals. The most important advantage of this type of assessment is that it is meaningful. As Norris and Hoffman (1993) put it:

> **A language sample obtained in context is far more meaningful than information gleaned about a child's language from discrete tasks that attempt to assess the semantic, syntactic, morphological, phonological, and pragmatic components separately. (p. 111)**

Another advantage is that global assessment provides teachers with the opportunity to assess learning processes and higher-order thinking. As Vance (1990) puts it:

> **Whole language also provides teachers with the opportunity to use and appreciate the unique, idiosyncratic thinking processes of their students. Assessment is not limited to determining whether a right or wrong word is written in the blank, but is expanded to include conversation, written and oral; the application of skills in contextual settings; and**

observation of the students' ability to discuss, learn from others, draw meaning from various activities and sources, and exercise problem-solving skills. (p. 181)

However, opponents of global assessment claim that qualitative measures are still in need of validation. They also claim that the range of tasks involved in this type of assessment is narrow. A third disadvantage of this type of assessment is associated with scoring. With global assessment, many studies have found differences in rater behaviour due to factors as rater background and amount of rater training (e.g., Chalhoub-Deville, 1996; McNamara, 1996; Schoonen *et al.*, 1997; Weigle, 1994).

18.3 A comprehensive approach to assessment

As shown above, the skills-based and whole language assessments represent two different ways for collecting information. Both types of information are necessary for assessment to be effective (Brown, 1988, 1995; Campbell *et al.*, 2000; Herschensohn, 1994; Huba and Freed, 2000; Sasaki, 1996). As Brown (1995) puts it, "Clearly, both [quantitative and qualitative] types of data can yield valuable information in any evaluation, and therefore ignoring either type of information would be pointless and self-defeating" (p. 232). Therefore, the comprehensive approach holds that the teacher should move from assessing micro-skills to assessing the understanding of whole texts, and finally to assessing the production of texts. Such a procedure allows teachers to gather data at different stages of a comprehensive lesson during the integration of subsidiary skills with main language skills and vice versa. It also enables teachers to assess all language aspects which, in turn, increases the reliability of the resulting information. During the stages of integrating each two main skills and all language skills,

students should self-assess the ideas they understand and produce rather than the language.

18.4 Self-checks

1. **What are the most common ways of assessing language proficiency in your context?**
2. **What effect does assessment have on instruction?**
3. **A combination of both qualitative and quantitative measures guarantees the validity of the results. Discuss.**

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